A TREATISE ON ESTABLISHMENT IN THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS

(CATUSACCA DALHI KAMMA KATHA)

By Bhaddanta Revata of Minbu (Myanmar)

Translated from the original Myanmar
By U Tin U

Yangon 1984

FOREWORD

The foundations of Buddhism are the Four Noble Truths (*ariyasaccani*) namely, the truth of suffering, the truth of the cause of suffering, the truth of the extinction of suffering and the truth of the path leading to the deliverance from suffering. Whether the Buddhas arise or not these Four Noble Truths exist in the universe. The Buddhas only reveal these truths which lie hidden in the dark abyss of time.

There have been quite a few books written by Eastern and Western scholars to enlighten the readers on the doctrine of the Four Noble Truths. This new treatise is another attempt made by the learned *Sayadaw Bhaddanta Revata* , based on the Pali Texts, Commentaries and traditions prevailing in Myanmar. Having studied the *Dhamma* (the teachings of the Buddha) thoroughly and practiced it diligently for a long time, the author of this book achieves remarkably clear and thorough exposition of the doctrine of the Four Noble Truths from a practical stand-point.

We read in the *Vinaya Pitaka* of the Buddhist canon of the predominant mental attitude of the people of India-extreme asceticism on one side and extreme luxury on the other. Prince *Siddattha*, before he became the Buddha, saw these attitudes clearly since his youth he had a great desire to find a solution to this problem of suffering, its cause and its removal. With this object in view he renounced his worldly life and approached all the teachers of the different schools of thought of his time, but nobody was competent to give him what he earnestly sought. He strenuously practised all forms of severe austerities and made a superhuman effort for six long years. Eventually his delicate body was reduced to almost a skeleton. The more he tormented his body, the further he was away from his goal. Having realized the utter futility of self-mortification, he finally decided to follow a different course, avoiding the two extremes of self-mortification and self-indulgence.

The new path which he discovered was the middle way. The Four Noble Truths subsequently became one of the salient characteristics of his teachings. By following this path his wisdom grew into his fullest power and he discovered the Four Noble Truths, understood things as they truly were, and finally attained full enlightenment. As a man Prince *Siddattha*, by his own will, effort, wisdom and compassion, attained Buddhahood - that highest possible state of perfection- and he revealed to mankind the only straight path that leads thereto.

The starting point of Buddhism is right understanding (*sammaditthi*) of the Four Noble Truths. Here it should be noted that these fundamental Truths are not speculative theories. They are unalterable Truths discovered by direct experience, which everyone can confirm himself. The Buddha did not encourage any metaphysical speculation. From the relative truths (*sammuti sacca*) he reached the absolute truth (*paramattha sacca*) and the only faith called for in Buddhism is the kind of faith or confidence based on experience or knowledge of truth.

To the seekers after truth the Buddha said, 'Do not believe in anything on mere hearsay; do not believe in traditions merely because they are old and handed down through generations; do not believe in rumors or anything because people talk much about it; do not believe anything simply because the written testimony of some ancient sage is shown to you; never believe in anything because the custom of many years leads you to regard it as truth; do not believe in anything in the mere authority of your teacher or monks. According to your own experience and after thorough investigation, whatever agrees with your reason and is conductive to your

own wellbeing and to that of all other living beings, accept that as truth and live accordingly.' (*Kalama Sutta, Anguttara*.)

A laudable effort has been made by the author to give a clear exposition of the Four Noble Truths in a suitable form. This book is intended to make available to those who are really interested in the teachings of the Buddhas as a guide to the right path to deliverance from all suffering by means of the right understanding of the Four Noble Truths, and also to the English reading public an English version of these Truths. It is written in simple, easy language which is easily intelligible to the average students.

Venerable *Bhaddanta Thitthila, Aggamahapandita*

Yangon, 1346- B.E. (1984)

INSTRUCTIONS

Instructions by the author to the

Preachers of the *Dhamma* and Learners (*Yogi*)

Of the *Dhamma.*

In the interest of the prolongation of the Buddha's Teachings, *Sasana*, in the three-fold aspects of Learning (*pariyatti*), practice (*patipatti*) and Attainment (*pativedha*), a preacher of the *Dhamma* should give the following preliminary to a learner or *Yogi* who seeks his guidance:-

1. Let him/ her learn by heart the Pali and the meaning of *Dhammacakka Pavattana Sutta*, or at least the Four Noble Truths (therein);

2. Or, if even that should appear too hard, let him memorize the following verse and its meaning:

'*Yam kinci dukkham sambhoti*

Sabbam chanda raga mklaka

Chandaraga nirodhena

Na'tthi dukkhassas sambhavo.'

All woes (*dukkha*) that ever arise

Are rooted in volitional activities (*sankhara*):

With the cessation of volitional activities,

There is no more arising of woes (*dukkha*).

(For the fuller interpretation see P.44 below).

3. Or, if even that also should prove too hard,

Let him memorize the following simple verse

which is the essence of the Four Noble Truths:

'Because one craves for being,

Rebirth and all woes arise.

Abandon the craving,

And there ends all woes.'

'Understanding (the Truth of *Dukkha*),*1*

Eradicating Craving, *2*

Realizing Cessation (of craving).*3*

This is the three-stage practice for stream-entry'*4*

*(This is the epitome which will be expanded in this book).

(1) Having the Right Understanding that existence is *dukkha* is called *sacca* n*ana* or knowledge of the Truth.

(2) Having known that craving is the origin of rebirth which is recurrent *dukkha*, the yogi eradicates craving through purposive meditation. This is called *kicca nana*.

(3) After diligent practice he wins insight and realizes cessation of craving: this is *nibbana*, peace. Knowledge of having realized cessation is called *kata* n*ana*.

(4) 'Stream-entry', *sotapatti magga*, the First Stage of enlightenment along the Eightfold Noble Path.

4. Further, let him memorize the thirty-two constituents of the body (*dvuttimsakaram*) such as hair of the head, (*kesa*), hair of the body (*loma*), etc.

Such memorizing equips the *Yogi* with (a minimum of) the Learning aspect.

5. Having seen that the yogi has memorized that much, the preacher should dwell at length on the Four Noble Truths according to the author's works on the subject.

6. Let the *yogi* get himself thoroughly acquainted with the teaching and then contemplate on the knowledge of the Four Noble Truths so that the second-hand knowledge becomes direct, first-hand knowledge or self experience of the Truth.

N.B. This contemplation in fact amounts to real practice in the teaching, which is called ‘sitting in meditation,' ‘developing insight (*vipassana*),' ‘dispelling distraction or mental restlessness (*uddhaccam*), or cultivating insight-knowledge into the Truth along the Path (*magga sacca bhavana*). One who contemplates on the Truth is a true follower or practitioner of the Buddha's Teaching.

7. When the Yogi has persisted in the contemplation the knowledge of Truth *sacca nana* will dawn on him.

8. Then the teacher may gauge the progress of the pupil whether Truth has actually been grasped by the latter. This is ascertainable from the type of answer the yogi gives on being asked about certain topical questions by the teacher. The teacher may, if he is so satisfied, tell his pupil that the latter is firmly established in the teaching, having attained Insight-knowledge.

9. It must be impressed upon the pupil, if he is a lay disciple, by the teacher that for this practice one must take refuge in the Buddha, the *Dhamma* (i.e., the teachings of the Buddha) and the *sangha*, the Noble Order of the Buddha's disciples, who individually are called *bhikkhus*). Further, one must abandon the false belief in self (*atta ditthi*). Also, one must live on a means of livelihood free from the three kinds of physical misconduct (i.e., killing, stealing and sexual misbehavior) and the four kinds of verbal misconduct (i.e., lying, creating misunderstanding between persons, harsh speech and frivolous talk or gossiping).

10. Let the yogi memorize and devote his thoughts by telling beads to the key words about the Truth, viz:

'Arising is suffering (*dukkha*) :

Non-arising is peace (*nibbana*).'

(uppado dukkham anupado nibbanam).

11. Let both teacher and pupil strive to become ‘learned, practised and attained' ‘under the Buddha's Teaching, having knowledge of the truth. Let them be constantly mindful that only thus can they hope to escape the perils of the four miserable states of existence (*apaya*)* and of round of births (*samsara*).

12. For certain individuals, it is quite possible to attain ‘Stream-entry' (*sota patti magga*) just by reading, digesting (and, of course, contemplating) the Introduction (pp. 3-19) only.

May the elder *Bhikkhus* at the head of the various monasteries in view of prolongation of the due Attainments in the light of the Learning (of the

Dhamma), teach the *samaneras* (novices) and lay pupils under their charges the Four Noble Truths as taught by the Buddha in *Dhammacakka Pavattana Sutta*.

* 'The four miserable states of existence or *apaya*:' (1) the torturous realms of incessant retribution (*niraya*), (2) animals, (3) hungry and miserable beings (*peta*) and (4) frightened and hapless beings (*askra kaya*).'

These four planes of existence are the destinies that await the evil-doers. By evil-doing is meant the ten kinds of immorality consisting of the three kinds of physical misconduct, the four kinds of verbal misconduct (which have been referred to under item 9 above) and the three kinds of mental action, i.e., covetousness (*abijjha*), ill will (*vyapada*) and wrong view (*micchaditthi*).

(End of 'Instructions')

PREFACE

The scope of this book is quite limited (but effective for practice). For, unlike the 'Path of Purification', '*Visuddhi Magga*' (the monumental work by the Great Elder Buddhaghosa, 5th C.,) which deals with the threefold training (*sekkha*) comprising the cultivation of Virtue (*sila*), Concentration (*Samadhi*), and Knowledge (*panna*) for the eradication of Craving (*tanha*) and realization of *Nibbana* based on the following verse :-

Sile patitthaya naro sapanno

Cittam pannanca bhavayam

Atap+ nipako bhikkhu

So imam vijataye jatam- - Samyutta Nikaya, Sagatha Vagga, V. 167

(A person of native wisdom

Establishes himself in virtuous conduct,

And develops concentration and Insight-knowledge;

Such an ardent and sagacious *bhikkhu*

Can clear the tangle of lust

That catches the world.)

This book focuses on the root of suffering or ills (*dukkha*); it is mainly based on the verse:-

Ye dhamma hetuppabhava

Tesam hetum tathagato aha

Tesanca yo nirodho

Evam vadi mahasamano -Vinaya, Maha Vagga.

The essence of this verse is that:

Through the arising of craving (*tanha*) as cause, there arises birth (*jati*) and all the bundle of ills (*dukkha*) as the necessary result. Where craving is uprooted through the Path-knowledge (*magga nana*), birth and all the bundle of ills arise no more.

That was what the Venerable *Assaji* taught succinctly. It sheds sufficient light on the Four Noble Truths for one to discern them.

To relate the background story in brief:

Upatissa the ascetic (who later became the Venerable *Sariputta*, (one of *Gotama* Buddha's two chief disciples or *Maha savakas*), wandering (in the forest) in his earnest quest for the answer to the riddle of birth, ageing, disease and death that are the scourge of humanity, met the Venerable *Assaji*. He asked the *bhikkhu* what sort of doctrine the Buddha taught his followers. The Noble *bhikkhu* replied in the above-quoted verse which is pithy but enlightening enough. *Upatissa*, on hearing just the first two lines of the stanza, gained enlightenment and attained to Stream-entry (*sota patti magga*).

The underlying meaning of those two lines dawned on *Upatissa* that the cause of birth is none other than caving. Once this causal law has been seen through, it necessarily follows to the amazingly sharp knowledge of *Upatissa*-that when craving is abandoned then no Birth and its woeful consequences can arise. Yes, cast aside craving, and birth ceases. Cessation means shifting of interest from craving to non-craving that is *Nibbana*. Thus one enters (*patti*) the ‘Stream' of Truth (*sota*) and attains to Stream-entry (*sota patti magga*), the First stage of Path-knowledge or *magga nana*.And that was precisely the necessary Insight gained then by *Upatissa*.

The full meaning of the four-line stanza is this:-

'Birth, ageing, disease and death-

The whole set of suffering

That constitutes the Noble truth of suffering (*dukkha sacca*)

Spring from craving which is the cause.

The cessation of both the cause and the consequence

Has been pointed out by the *Tathagata*,

The One who has thus come-

i.e., who has arisen to declare the Four Noble Truths

In the manner of all previous *Buddhas*.

This is what the Great Sage taught'.

So the essence is: Birth and the sorrows that it entails are caused by craving; when craving is rooted out by the Path-knowledge birth and its consequent woes cease. That is the end of all sorrows (*dukkha*),that is *Nibbana* where birth is no more (*ajata*).

In this book the First Chapter gives a brief outline of the Four Noble Truths, which is expanded in the Second Chapter where the Noble Truths of *dukkha* is discussed in the light of Purity of Vision or *ditthi visuddhi*. In the Third Chapter the cause of *dukkha* or the (second) Noble Truth of the cause or *samudaya sacca* is explained, which once seen, dispels all doubts in regard to past, present and future (*kanka vitarana visuddhi*). In the Fourth Chapter the (third) Noble Truth of Cessation (*nirodha sacca*) is explained which establishes the reality of *Nibbana* and how it may be realized; in the Fifth Chapter the essentials of the Insight (*vipassana*) and the gaining thereof through Purity of knowledge (*nandassana visuddhi*). The Sixth Chapter deals with various methods of working for Insight to widen the scope of learning (and practice).

A Word of Recommendation

By the Venerable *Sasana*, Head of *Hmangin*

Monastery in *Minbu* (*Magwe* Division).

The Venerable *Sasana*, aged 71, a *bhikkhu* of 51 *vasa* standing, wise of scriptural learning and accustomed to imparting it to others, residing at *Hmangin* Monastery in *Minbu*, having thoroughly edited and reviewed this work entitled *CATUSACCA DALHI KAMMA KATHA* or '**A Treatise on Establishment in the Four Noble Truths,**' believes that this book is very suitable for those earnest seekers of enlightenment aspiring for the nine supra-mundane (*lokuttara*) classes of knowledge.

It is therefore gladly endorsed that the book will serve as a manual to the attentive reader towards gaining penetrative knowledge of the Four Noble Truths.

(Signed) *Ven. Sasana*

Hmangin Sayadaw.

* *Sasana*; in this context, means *Dhamma* and *vinaya*. *Dhamma* here refers to the *Suttas* and *Abhidhamma*; *vinaya* is the *vinaya pitaka*, rules of conduct for members of the Order, *Sangha*. All of them, *sasana*, may be rendered as the Buddha's teaching. Some render *sasana* as ‘dispensation′.

TO THE READER:

1. In this book quotations from the *Pali* and commentaries (*atthakathas*) thereon are explained in Myanmar in some places, whereas in other places only the Myanmar renderings are given for easier reading. These renderings are faithfully done to bring out the original sense.
2. The main purpose of the book is for a quick grasping of the Buddha's Teaching. The quotations and references to the Text (i.e. *Pali*), are mere aids to understanding. If the reader gets the message and gains a sense of remorse and urgency leading to a wearisome attitude to the suffering- laden life and thence the cessation of Craving- which means gaining Insight Knowledge- those aids will have become dispensable.
3. Accordingly, the absence of textual references should be taken as not lacking in authority; rather they are left out for easier reading. It is, to my knowledge, the style adopted by many an elderly one (*maha thera*) of yore.

The Author, the Venerable *Revata*:

A Biographical Sketch

Date of birth and Birthplace

The author was born on Wednesday, the fourteenth waxing day of *Tagu* (falling before the Myanmar New Year Day), 1230 Myanmar Era (1868 Christian Era), in the town of *Sagu* in *Minbu* District (*Magwe* Division).

Lay name and Lineage

As a lay person the author was named *U Shwe Hline (Hlaing*). His father was a physician, a descendant of a high official of the royal court at *Ava*, known as *Min Ye Htut,* holder of the royal title *Naymyo-zeyya-thura*, who was entrusted by King *Hsinbyushin* (the second son of *Alaungpaya*, popularly called *Alaung*-*mintaragyi*) to set up fresh settlements in central Myanmar.

Min Ye Htut developed the barren area around the small towns of *Sagu* and *Salin*, setting up agricultural villages called *Pyilongyaw*, *Me-yin-thee-gon* and *Phalandaw*, etc., near *Pwintbyu*, around *Shwepanmyaing* Pagoda which lies midway between *Sagu* and *Salin*. These villages became new settlements of *Shans* and *Burmans* whose main occupation was farming.

At the time of the dethronement of King *Thibaw* (1885), *U Shwe Hline* was a novice or *samanera* in the monastery whose head was the Venerable *Ottama*. This Abbot *U Ottama* was no other than the celebrated *Boh Ottama* or *Mingyi Boh Ottama* who left the monastic life to lead a band of rebels from central Myanmar against the British invaders and gave up his life in the heroic struggle. *U Shwe Hline* was one of the adopted sons of *Sayadaw* (*Boh*) *Ottama*.

Lay Life and Activities

U Shwe Hline qualified himself in land surveying and served the British Government as a Survey Inspector in *Minbu*. Later he became a Third Grade Pleader and advanced to the Second Grade. For quite a long time he volunteered as a religious preacher for the local voluntary Buddhist Association called *Sammakammanta* (Right Action) Association, a branch of the country-wide Young Men's Buddhist Association movement.

His Other Works

At the age of forty-nine *U Shwe Hline* published *Amoghakala Nibbana Maggapatipatti*, a treatise on Buddhist practice leading to *Nibbana*. It is now extinct.* at that time the author had set up a religious group that routinely

* N.B.-Two years after the ninth reprinting of the present book, the supposedly extinct book referred to here emerged, the only surviving copy, 74 years after its publication, in *Natmauk*; and it has now been reprinted by the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

recited the succinct Myanmar verses (by *Ledi Sayadaw*) on *Abhidhammattha Sangaha*. He also taught this subject of ‘Condensed *Abhidhamma'* to the group.

The three works:

1. *Hetu-phala-katha*
2. *Nama-rkpa-pariccheda-katha*
3. *Dassanena-pahatabba-katha*

Formed 'A Manual of Buddhist Practice for Supramundane Knowledge' which was (completed by *U Shwe Hline* in 1919; 1280 B.E.) at the age of fifty. It was edited and reviewed by the Venerable *Pannajota*, head of *Maha-Sukhitarama* Monastery in *Minbu* in 1282 B.E., and published in 1284 B.E. According to the author's notes the three treatises were based on *Dhammasaangani* (the first book of the seven *Abhidhamma* texts) and *Atthasalini*, the commentary thereon.

Acquisition of Scriptural Learning

During the years of serving as an honorary trustee of the *Shwesettaw* Pagoda near *Minbu U Shwe Hline* spent most of his time studying seriously the *Tipataka* or the set of Three Baskets of canonical literature which he received as a personal gift, out of esteem, from the famous recluse *U Khanti* of Mandalay Hill. He also studied at the feet of such well known teachers as *Ledi Sayadaw*, acknowledged authorities both in scholarship and in practice.

U Shwe Hline* Becomes a *Bhikkhu

It was a May morning in 1944, on the full-moon day of the Myanmar month of *Kason* (*Vasak*). The re-occupation forces of British- American bombers raided *Minbu* that razed the whole town to the ground, killing or wounding over a thousand people. *U Shwe Hline's* house was also destroyed. But miraculously, the post by which he was squatting stood intact. All his household property was gone without a trace. Only the ‘Manual' referred to above somehow remained amidst the unsightly debris. Seized by a sense of urgency and remorse (*samvega*), *U Shwe Hline* decided, there and then, that he would renounce the world and become a *bhikkhu*. A hunt for the necessary paraphernalia* for a *bhikkhu's* entry into the order, the *Sangha*- which consists of eight items- was made in the devastated town. Only a precious single set was somehow collected. And so *U Shwe Hline* got admission into the *Sangha* as a *bhikkhu*; his preceptor was the head of Kan-U Monastery in *Sagu*. The *bhikkhu* name of *U Shwe Hline* was (Veherable) *Revata*.

* ‘The necessary paraphernalia,' *parikkhara*: the eight requisites, viz: three robes, alms- bowl, razor, needle, girdle, water-strainer.

The writing of This Book

Now that no *Pitaka* literature was left with him after the bombing of *Minbu*, the Venerable *Revata* (*U Shwe Hline*) felt the need to preserve what had been stored up in his memory, for he had memorized routinely much of *Pitaka* literature over the long years. So he recited them day and night lest they faded out from his memory. His preceptor expressed wonder and approval at his perseverance.

The *bhikkhu* felt a sense of mission. He wished to leave for posterity a sort of short-cut approach to gain enlightenment, at least to the First stage of Stream-entry (*sota patti magga*)

that would render them safe from the four *apaya* * or miserable states.* (See, f.n. to page (v) above). He therefore set out on his book, CATUSACCA DALHI KAMMA KATHA, working throughout the entire day time without even resting for a short nap, while working in the night in poor subdued light. For, it was a time when air raids were being expected any time. Since there was no stationer he had to collect one-sided (used) paper for his material. The book was completed and faired out by himself when he was seventy-nine, i.e., in 1309 B.E. It went to the press the same year.

Other works by the Author

His other works were written in Yangon between 1949 and 1956 and they included:-

- *Saccadipaka Katha*
- *Sotapatti-magga Katha*
- *Ditthi vicikiccha pahatabba Katha*
- *Niyyanika-magga Katha*
- *Chadhatu-magga Katha*
- *Atthadhamma-patisambhida-magga Katha*

A strange Event

Some strange and remarkable events marked the author's life. Some of them are:

During his short stay in Yangon in 1949 when it was barely three days for the beginning of the year's (1311 B.E.) *vassa*, Buddhist rains-retreat period* i.e., on the 12th of *Waso* (*vasak*) he insisted on going to *Minbu* for the *vassa*. It was obviously impossible, for insurgency was at its peak when Governments' authority stretched hardly beyond the capital city of Yangon. When the lay disciples protested that it was a tall order, the aged *bhikkhu* simply said, 'I am going to make it.'

* 'Rains-retreat period': under the Discipline, *bhikkhus* are required to stay at a monastery, without making overnight journeys, for the rainy period of three months beginning from the full-moon day of *Wazo* (mid-July).

The next day, on the thirteenth waxing day of *waso*, the news that *Meiktila*, *Yenangyaung* and *Chauk* were reoccupied simultaneously by the Government forces led by Colonel *Zaw Khaung* reached the Army Chief of Staff (now the president of the Union of Myanmar). The Government assigned the task of restoring civil administration in the reoccupied area to the Secretary in the Ministry of Home Affairs, to be assisted by the Director-General of Police and three special commissioners in charge of Northern Myanmar. Special permission was sought and obtained from the Army Chief of Staff to let the Venerable *Revata* accompany the team of officials proceeding to *Chauk* in four-seated plane. Thence the old *bhikkhu* proceeded to *Minbu* by boat just in time for the *vasa*.

A Strange Dream

It was the time when the historic Sixth Buddhist Convention under the auspices of the Venerable *Nyaungyan Sayadaw* was in progress. On a certain morning (at about eight o' clock) the Venerable *Revata* related how he had had the remarkable dream in the small hours of the previous night. He saw himself in the dream floating (walking) in space with the eight *bhikku*

requisites on his person and the parasol shading above him. After waking up from the dream he contemplated mindfulness until dawn. And it was indescribably fruitful.

Close Shaves

The old *bhikkhu* continued to relate the close shaves he had experienced in his life. When he was a boy he and his elder brother set out in a small boat from *Dedaye* in the Delta Division, to gather firewood. They were caught in a storm which sank their boat. He was adrift in the river for seven whole days and yet miraculously managed to survive.

On another occasion, when he was back in central Myanmar, he got seriously ill. Everyone had given up hope: some were actually making his coffin, some were going to the monastery to ask of the *Sanga* for administering the funeral rites. However, Death again evaded him somehow. Then there was the miraculous escape from the bombing in *Minbu* referred to earlier.

From those appointments with Death he had come out unclaimed by death somehow. He took them to mean only one thing: that he would not yet breathe his last until he had gained enlightenment in the Myanmar.

The Venerable *Nyaungyan Sayadaw's* Applause

Barely an hour after the Venerable *Revata's* recounting of his strange experiences, there arrived, quite unexpectedly, the Venerable *Nyangyan Sayadaw*. The much-revered Elder had come to express his applause for the Venerable *Revata's* book, *Catusacca Dal#h+ Kamma Katha*. He said the chief merit of the book lay in its scriptural basis. '*Sadhu, sadhu, sadhu*'(Good, good, good) said he.

Honored By the Venerable *Myatheindan Sayadaw*

The following day the Venerable *Myatheindan Sayadaw* of Mandalay called. He came to request the Venerable *Revata* to come and stay at *Bagaya* Monastery in *Amarapura*. With the advanced age of the author in mind, he promised the best care for the honored guest there. This earnest request he repeated twice later.

Enlightenment

It was late in the evening, about 9 o'clock, towards the end of May, 1956, when the author's personal attendant (*kappiya*) *Maung Ba Chit* in breathless excitement called out: 'Come, look! It's amazing! The Reverend!' No sooner had he mumbled those rather vague words than he ran back to the monastery (which was just within the compound of the old *bhikkhu's* son *U Chan Tha*). Thinking that the old *bhikkhu* might have been taken ill, people rushed to the monastery with medicines. But they were pleasantly surprised. For, instead of a lying old *bhikkhu* as expected, it was a sitting *bhikkhu* upright and cross-legged, with his face calm and serene, the like of which they had never seen before in him.

'The burden has been laid down.

Peace: Yes, peaceful it is.

Know all existence as Impermanence (*anicca*),

Ill (*dukkha*), not-self (*anatta*)

In the ultimate sense.'

Those were the jubilant words that came out solemnly, yet sweetly, from the sedate *bhikkhu*.

Repaying the Kindness of Lay disciples of His Home Town

Early in July, not long after the beginning of the *Vasa* period, the Venerable *Revata* told his disciples he wanted to pay a visit to *Minbu* soon: he wished to repay the kindness of the lay disciples of his home town, *Minbu*. It was pointed but to him that the trip would not be advisable considering his age (for he was 88 then): his health was not too good. The prevalent heavy rains were definitely unsuitable for making a trip to the jetty. Besides, medical attendance must also be arranged for the journey. To all this reasoned discussion the old *bhikkhu* merely said, 'Don't you worry. Everything will be all right.' And so his will had to be conceded to. At the time of going to the jetty the pouring rain suddenly stopped. When he had been settled in his first class cabin it was discovered that his next-room occupant was a doctor proceeding to Mandalay. The doctor readily volunteered to attend to the aged and ailing *bhikkhu* on the journey. (*Minbu* is midway on the riverine journey up the *Irrawaddy*).

The Demise

The elder *Revata* (*Bhaddanta Revata*), author of the book, passed away on the 16th April 1957 at *Laythagon* (also known as *Dat-taw-gon*) Monastery in *Minbu*. He was in his 90th year then.

-Recounted by *U Chan Tha*, (I.C.S.), Retired Secretary to the Government, son of the author.-

A Word of Thanks

In this ninth reprinting of *CATUSACCA DALHI KAMMA KATHA*, all the sources of the quotations and references have been mentioned as footnotes, thanks to the painstaking efforts of the editors who are learned in *Pali*. For this and for the overall high standard of corrections in printing I am deeply grateful to all members of the staff of the Press Department of the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

(Signed) *Chan Tha*

A TREATISE ON

ESTABLISHMENT IN THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS

'*Catusacca Dalhi Kamma Katha*'

Table of Contents Page

Chapter four – On the Cessation of Dukkha

Chapter five – On the Path

CATUSACCA DAḶHĪ KAMMA KATHĀ

(*Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambudhassa*).

Veneration to the Exalted One, the Homage-worthy, the Perfectly Self-Enlightened.

Homage to the Three Gems

My words of veneration to the Three Gems will be quotation from the Text:*

(To the Buddha)

(*yo vadatam pavaro manujesu*
sakyamuni bhagavā katakicco
pāragato balavīra samangi
tam sugatam aham vande).

The Buddha, excellent among men
Who teaches the Four Noble Truths,
The Great Sage, the chief of *Sakyans*,
Is possessed of the six supernatural powers.
Being endowed with great physical and mental strengths
Coupled with right exertion,
The Buddha has done

His noble mission as a Buddha

And gone over

To the yonder shore the ocean of Existence (*Nibbāna*).

To the Buddha who has thus gone well,

I, *Revata Thera*, pay my veneration.

(To the *Dhamma*)

(*rāga virāga manejamasokam*

dhammamasankhatamappatikulam

madhuramimam pagunam suvibhattam

dhammamimam aham vande).

To this Noble Path

That makes for the quenching of Passion,

* From *Khuddaka Nikāya, Vimāna Vatthu* (p.76)

Bring Fruition,

Freeing the mind from craving

And releasing one from Sorrow

Thro' the destruction of defilements;

To this *Nibbāna*

The Unconditioned, unassociated with loathsomeness;

To this Text of the Buddha's words,

Rich in taste, well proportioned

And minutely accurate,

Worthy of taking to heart-

To this *Dhamma*,

The Body of ten Divisions

Comprising the Four Noble Paths,

The Four fruitions,

Nibbāna and the Text-

I, *Revata Thera*, pay my veneration.

(To the *Sanghā*)

(yattha ca dinnam mahapphalamāhu

Catusu sucisu purisayugesu

Attha ca puggala dhammadasā te

Sanghamimam aham vande).

‘This has been said

That making offerings to those four pairs

Of Purified Ones

Bring great merit.

Those Eight classes of Noble Ones (Individuals) too

Have comprehended the *Dhamma*

That is the Four Noble Truths.

To those Noble Ones

Who constitute the *Sanghā*

I, *Revata Thera*, pay my veneration.

Introduction

Elder *Revata Maha Thera*, of *Dakkhina Thāna Laytha* Monastery, *Dattawgon, Minbu,* who had delved deep into the scriptures over the years with a view to mastering them, and who had intellectual prowess and perspicacity, being requested by one *U Hla Gyaw*, a lay disciple, working as Public Prosecutor in *Minbu*, to write a book, based on the Text (*Pali*) and the commentaries, for a clear understanding of the Four Noble Truths, has written this treatise. This work, it is believed, will reveal the Four Noble Truths as plainly as a ruby placed on the palm of the hand. It is the author's hope that the book will be a good aid in getting the reader firmly established in the knowledge and practice of the Four Noble Truths. In writing this book the author does not have in mind any reward or popular esteem: he is purely

motivated by loving-kindness towards humanity, which is what the Buddha himself has exemplified. This work entitled CATUCASSA DAḶHĪ KAMMA KATHĀ is based on the Text and commentaries such as *Patisambhida Magga*, *Visuddhi Magga, Salāyatana Samyutta*, etc.

May the readers pay proper attention to what is being said herein, and gain good comprehension of the Four Noble Truths.

Title of the Book, etc.

A writer is, according to the commentary,* obliged to mention at the outset the following five things:-

1. Title of his work (*sañña*);

2. Reason (*nimittam*) for writing the book: which here is the desire- both apparently and inwardly- to enlighten others on the Four Noble Truths;

3. Name of author (*kattā*);

4. Scope and extent of the work (*parimānam*);

5. Aim or objective, i.e., the advantage the book will bring to the reader (*payojanam*);

(sañña nimittam kattā ca parimanam payojanam sabbāgamassa pubbeva vattaabbam vatthum'icchita.)

The Author's Custom in Preaching and the Disciple's Obligation

The author's standpoint in the matter of preaching the *Dhamma* and the obligation on the part of the disciples may be stated here.

Authors and preachers before us traditionally had been scarce in their exposition on the Four Noble Truths as taught by the Buddha in *Dammacakka Sutta*. Instead they usually dwelt in the meditation for calm (*samatha*) and insight (*vipassanā*) which lead to the realization of the Four Noble Truths. Or they would discourse on the progressive training beginning with morality (*sila*), and setting up concentration (*Samādhi*) for gaining knowledge (*pañña*). Or they would exhort their disciples to practice asceticism, (such as continued fasting, etc.), or for sitting in meditation, or for dispelling stray thoughts. All of those preaching, of course, are the

base for the comprehension of the Four Noble Truths and are therefore quite commendable.

However, they would seem (to this author) to be missing the essence. A simpler and far-reaching approach that pinpoints on the Four Noble Truths has been lacking in their mode of preaching or writing. The result quite often is that much precious time is spent without getting sufficient insight into the Four Noble Truths. Some waver, being unable to see the escape (from *samsāra*) that lies in (the quenching of one's craving, which is) *Nibbāna*, much efforts go unrewarded. It is, therefore, the custom of the present author to teach the Four Noble Truths, as declared in *Dhammacakka Sutta*, from the very outset. This is because perception of the Four Noble Truths can lead even a hunter or a fisherman to gain the Path as Stream-enterer or *sotapanna*. Stories of such Stream-enterers abound in the scriptures; to wit, *Ariya* the fisherman, a pickpocket, a gang of five hundred robbers, who lived in the Buddha's days and heard the Four Noble Truths. These examples convince the author to begin with the teaching of the Four Noble Truths.

A case in point is that of *Dhananjānī*, a *Brahmin* who attained *jhanic* powers. This highly competent man, on hearing a discourse by the Venerable *Sāriputta* on training for insight (*vipassanā*), developed weariness for the five aggregates of existence. However, since the Venerable *Sāriputta* did not teach the Four Noble Truths the wise *brahmin* never realized *Nibbāna*, the real escape from the five aggregates he had learned to loath. Accordingly, he died a world- ling (i.e., not winning the Path) and was reborn as a worldling in *Brahma* realm. The Buddha saw this, so he sent the Venerable *Sāriputta* to the *Brahma* world to teach him the Four Noble Truths. Then only did the *Brahma* win the Path and become an *ariya* (Noble one).* The Four Noble Truths, therefore, is a must for effective preaching.

Moreover, Stream-entry is won by abandoning defilements, not through development of insight, (*bhāvana pahātabba*); # i.e., it is not the getting rid of restlessness (*uddhacca*), sensual passion (*raga*) and ill-will (*vyāpāda*). It is to be won by abandoning defilements through perception (*dassana pahātabba*).

* see *Majjhima paṇṇāsa*, p 395, commentary, p 294

\# Development of insight: here 'Insight' is used in the technical sense.

> The text calls it *bhāvanaya pahātabba,* 'abandoning (defilements) through development of insight' which means Path practice for the three higher know- ledges. Path practice for Stream-entry is called *dassanena pahātabba*, 'abandoning (ignorance, wrong view and doubt) through perception or right understanding.'
>
> See *Dhatukathā, Abhidhammā.*

In other words, it is abandoning ignorance (*avijjā*), wrong view (*ditthi*) and doubt (*vicikicchā*), through dispelling the darkness that shrouds the world- ling's mentality to perceive the Four Noble Truths. Lay disciples are not in a state freed from sensual passion, ill-will and restlessness. But they may be able to see the Four Noble Truths still, and it is the author's desire to let them do so and win the Path at the initial stage of *sotapanna*. Lay disciples, who are still leading householder's life, unable yet to renounce the world and enter upon stringent ascetic practices, can learn the Four Noble Truths to their real benefit. They can commit certain essential passages from *Dhammacakka Sutta* relating to the Four Noble Truths, get at their meaning by consulting the learned persons, and then contemplate persistently, and thereby gain the necessary insight. Or else they may approach a teacher capable of instructing them on the Truths, or they may just use the present book as their guide for the purpose of contemplating and practice. That is the reason why the author makes it a point to first teach the Four Noble Truths which may be comprehended by abandoning through sheer perception certain deep-seated defilements, and which is the proper requisite for Stream-entry. He, therefore, does not give prio-rity in his method of teaching to stringent or ascetic practice or overcoming restlessness or attaining concentration (*Samādhi*).

Further, it is the obligation on the part of lay disciples to preach as well as practice the Truths with a view to gain penetrative insight. The Buddha has left us a legacy of his Teaching (*sāsanā*) in its three (complementary) aspects, namely: the Text (and the learning thereof), or *pariyatti*, the practice or *paṭipatti*, and the penetrative knowledge or *paṭivedha* of his teaching, the *Dhamma*. The legacy in its threefold aspect implies that even today there are persons who may yet attain to the Path.

And by penetrative knowledge under the Buddha's Teaching means the Buddha is still exhorting all of us: "Strive for a penetrative insight into the Truth, work diligently to that end".

As for the *bhikkhus*, they are in a position to devote to all the three aspects of the *sāsanā* whereas with the laity the multifarious household affairs keep them occupied most of the time allowing little chance of developing their mind. In spite of such a general situation, if the preacher teaches them the Four Noble Truths as taught by the Buddha in *Dhammacakka Sutta*, many a high-minded layman could very well gain insight. Stream-entry is quite within their reach.

Dhammacakka Sutta is a very forthright statement that all the world's ills (*dukkha*) have a specific cause (*samudaya*). And that, through the Path (*magga*) knowledge, this cause can be rooted out thereby putting an end to the arising of further ill (*dukkha*) once and for all. The method of the Buddha's teaching here, simple and concise, should not present any difficulty in comprehending the Truth.

This book is a summarization of the Twenty-four Cause Relations (*Paṭṭḥāna Pakārana*) and Law of Dependent Origination (*Paticcasamuppāda*).

Having thus stated the author's policy in the mode of preaching, I shall now proceed to take up the mission of bringing enlightenment to the reading public, as benefitting the Buddha's will.

The Various Modes of Preaching Adopted By the Buddha

Preachers have a certain method in exposition. The Buddha, the unrival-led Teacher, usually began with a synopsis (*uddesa*) which he expanded and "showed forth", (*niddesa*) and then added further elucidations (*paṭiniddesa*). The Buddha taught each hearer to suit the latter's latent inclination, seeing which mode of discourse would strike the right chord. Hence, the Buddha's words have been grouped under nine forms or *angas*, namely, *sutta* (dialogues, *geyya* (utterances in mixed prose and verse) *veyya-karana* (expositions), *gatha* (verses) *udāna* (joyous utterances), *itivuttaka* ('spoken thus'), *jātaka* (birth stories), *abbhutādhamma* (wonderful conditions), *vedalla* (delightful catechism).

Following the Buddha's example of teaching, I shall begin with a brief outline and then develop gradually on the theme. This, it is believed, should assist the reader to gain a graduated grasp of the subject, thereby getting firmly settled. Among hearers of a discourse there are different types of intelligence or aptitude, some sharp, some dull. The exposition in this book will be suited to both the types. May the readers pay proper attention and get the message herein.

The Meaning of Religious Practice

The purpose of religious practice (here) is striving for the knowledge of the Truth, i.e., the Four Noble Truths, and hence for the cessation of the process of rebirth (*jāti*). This again means striving for the cessation of craving (*taṇhā*) which causes rebirth. That being so, one must first of all be in a mental frame to strive for the end. A sense of urgency and remorse (*samvega*) must be present. This sense will come to you if you persistently reflect on the dangers of birth, ageing, disease, death and the dreadful hereafter falling into the four miserable states (*apāya*). These dangers and ills in fact constitute *dukkha*, the First Noble Truth. When the *yogi* (upon such reflection) perceives the dangers of birth, etc., craving for rebirth in another existence or *bhava taṇha* disappears. Then he set his heart on winning the

escape from those evils. The *bhodhisat* (*bhodisatta*) or the Buddha to be, saw the evils that surround rebirth and sought the way of release from those evils. To quote *Buddhavamsa* or the 'History of the Buddhas,:

"Because becoming again or rebirth is painful (*dukkha*), because the dissolution of the body is painful, because the losing of teeth, the graying of hair, the falling of the faculties and being bent with old age is extremely painful and inflicting, because breathing one's last in bewilderment is painful"

"And because I am subject to rebirth, with the consequent ageing and illness, therefore, precisely for fear of these dreadful consequences of rebirth, will I seek that which is the antithesis of aging, disease and death, that which is safe and secure, that which is tranquillity itself after the quelling of all evils, i.e.. *Nibbāna*." Thus did I (as Recluse *Sumedha*,) over four *asankheyyas* and a hundred thousand world cycles or *kappa*,* ponder seriously".

Dukkho punabbhavo nāma sarirassa ca bhedanam

Sammoha maranam dukkham jarāya abhimaddanam

Jāti dhammo jarādhammo vyādhidhammo saham tada

Ajāram amatam khemam pariyesessami nibbutim

-*Buddhavamsa*, p. 307

For four *asankheyyas* and a hundred thousand world cycles the *bodhisat* set out on the noble quest for the ageless, the disease less, until (as Prince *Siddattha*) at the foot of *bhodi*-tree the Buddha won Supreme Enlightenment, the birth less *Nibbāna* which alone is the deathless, - for whichever has arisen must inevitably pass away and only when the process of arising is stopped the consequent decaying comes to an end. And having seen craving as the cause of birth the Buddha abandoned craving completely, thus freeing himself of the burden of existence at his final passing away or *parinibbāna* when *Nibbāna* without any remainder of existence was attained. Here, birth is the origin (or *sa-mudaya*) of ageing and death; when there is no origination (birth), there is no consequence, decay manifested in ageing and death. Therefore, the Buddha points out that if one wants no-decay, one must work out for no-origination.

The crucial point to discern here is that so long as there is coming into being, that which has come into being must decay: this is the natural law. On the other hand, there is no such natural law that whichever has decayed, must rise again.

When all the moral taints or cankerous corruptions of the mind have been abandoned, then that body of five aggregates perceived as an individual entity,

* '*Kappas'*: 'world cycles' according to Buddhist cosmogony are of three kinds: *antara kappa, asankhyeyya kappa,* and *mahā kappa*, but when *kappa* stands alone, *mahā kappa* is meant - and which is (64 x 4) 256 times *antara kappa* (please see f.n. at p. 129 below) - and which is the period when the *Cakkavala* or world system undergoes one cycle from total dissolution into the four essential elements (*dhātu, maha bhuta*) to complete restoration. This is the period covered by a set of 4 *asankkheyya kappa*. The process of world cycles is the reaction of man's thoughts: "The World is led by Mind" (See p. 137 below). As such the concept of Time is not applicable in comprehending *kappa* even though the sense of time intervals must come into our reckoning.

enters *parinibbāna*, (the attaining of *Nibbāna* without any remainder of exist-ence): after the last moment of consciousness (*cuti citta*) there is no arising of a fresh set of five aggregates, i.e., no rebirth.

Unless the Four Noble Truths are comprehended

Rebirth or *samsāra* is Never Ended.

"*Bhikkhus*, both you and I have been caught up in the painful round of rebirths (*samsāra*) because of our ignorance of the Truth (*saccā*). So it behoves you to comprehend the Truth". Thus exhorted the Buddha to the *bhikkhus*.

"*Bhikkhus*, through not seeing the Four Noble Truths (being misled by ignorance and delusion) in their true light, *Samsāra* is infinitely a long journey of being reborn in the thirty-one planes, or rather, coming into being now in the four miserable states (*apāya*) and now in the fortunate realms of man and *devas*, helplessly, unsatisfactorily, woefully, just like the draft oxen at the mill or the moving wheel, marches on incessantly".

> *Catunnam (bhikkhave) ariyāsaccānam yathābhūtam adassanā dighamaddhānam samsaritam tāsu tāsueva jātisu.*
>
> -*Mahāparinibbāna Sutta*, p. 77

It is important to note that the preaching and learning of the Truth, the proper attention being paid to it, can bring about comprehension of the Truth. When there is

comprehension even a hunter or a fisherman can attain to Stream-entry. How is it so? Because when one comprehends the Truth one realizes *dukkha* as oppression, an ill, and (simultaneously), the peace and tranquillity of not becoming or non-arising (of the five aggregates) which practically means cessation of all sorts of ills and woes, so in a nutshell:

Comprehending *dukkha* (As the First Truth),

One abandons craving (*taṇhā*), the cause of *dukkha*:

And one's mind inclines to cessation

Which is Path-consciousness.

And this is how hankering after the five aggregates or *taṇhā* ceases.

A word of warning; until one attains to the Path-Knowledge as the first stage (*sotapatti maggạ ñāna*), there is no stability and security for a worldling or *puthujjana* whether he happens to be a great monarch of men, or of *devas*, or of *Brahmas*. Only *sotappatti magga* provides real security. For a *sotāpanna*, one who 'enters the stream' of the Path, is one who realizes *Nibbāna* and has been precluded from falling into the four miserable states or *apāya*; and is also firmly put on the Path until one is released from the hazards of *samsāra*, the round of births, ageing and death. That is why the Buddha, out of great compassion for all sentient beings, urged for the teaching of the Truth.

The Buddha's Exhortation

"*Bhikkhus*, should you be truly moved with compassion towards the specified multitude, you should teach them to enable them perceive the Four Noble Truths in their true light that this is *dukkha*, this is the cause of *dukkha*, this is the cessation of *dukkha*, and this is the practice that leads to cessation of *dukkha*."

The Duties of the Preacher and the Hearer

The Buddha has enjoined certain obligations to be fulfilled by preachers and by their hearers; see *Nidāna Vagga, Samyutta Nikaya* (p. 258).

"He is a preacher who deserves the name preacher if he teaches the *dhamma* that instills a sense of weariness of repeated round of births and thus getting rid of passion leading to a complete cessation of rebirth"

Jatim ce bhikkhu nibbidaya virāgāya nirodhāya dhammam deseti

Dhammakathiko bidkkūti alam vacanāya.

That is a duty of a preacher.

"He is a *bhikkhu* who deserves to be called one that practises the *dhamma* in accordance with the *dhamma* in its nine divisions (i.e., the four Paths or *magga*, the four Fruition or *phala* and *Nibbana*) if he practises for the weariness of repeated round of rebirths, for the quenching of passion with a view to complete cessation of rebirth".

Jātim ce bhikkhu nibbidaya viragāya nirodhāya patipanno hoti

Dhammānu dhammapatipanno bhikkhuti alam vacanāya.

That is a duty of a hearer.

"He is a *bhikkhu* who deserves to be called one that realizes *Nibbāna*, the end of *dukkha*, here and now, if he is weary of rebirth, is free from passion, has extinguished craving and is released from all shades of clinging".

Jātim ce bhikkhu nibbiddā virāgā nirodhā anupādāvimutto hoti

Ditthadhamma nibbāna patto bhikkhūti alam vacanāya.

Thus we can see that if one gives up clinging which is the product of craving and wrong view, the Path and the Fruition, leading to *Nibbāna*, can be attained to here and now.

The Buddha's Exhortation to Gain the Path Knowledge as Real Relief and Support.

Sa-nātha bhikkave bavatha, mā anātha.

This is the frequent exhortation by the Buddha to the *bhikkhus*. It means: "Be protected, *bhikkhus*, don't be unprotected". Here protection is a metaphor intended to mean to be safe and secure in the knowledge along the eightfold Noble Path, more

specifically, the attaining of the Path (*magga*) and the Fruition (*phala*), culminating in *Nibbāna*. For, that only is real security, being free from all sorts of *dukkha*.

The sub-commentator on *Visuddhi Magga* in his *Mahātīkā* puts it thus:-

"In the ultimate sense 'relief' in the Buddha's *sāsanā* or Teaching means the Fruition of the Noble Path. 'Support' means the Noble Path".

Paramatthato sāsane assāsonāma ariya phalam,

Patiṭṭhānāma ariya maggo.

VisuddhiMagga Mahātīkā, Vol. II, p. 385

The Wrong View, How It Begins and Ends

How wrong concepts and wrong views arise may be explained here.

(Q) On what do wrong concepts and views arise?

(A) Wrong concepts and wrong views originate in the mistaken belief that there is a self or *atta* in mind-and-matter, a compounded thing of five aggregates or *khandha*, which actually do not possess any stability or permanency, well-being and controllability or mastery, as if they were permanent, pleasant and controllable.

(Q) Why does this wrong view of self arise?

(A) Because, the ordinary person or worldling fails to see, through lack of mindfulness, the characteristic of impermanency - i.e., the impermanent nature of all compound things that flux of arising (*uppādo*) is instantly followed by development (*thī*) and dissolution (*bhanga*).

Further, the ordinary person fails to see the characteristic of not-self (*anatta*) in all compound things, even though he is all the time facing the hard facts of life that ageing, disease and death, unwelcome though they are, cannot be prevented; or that a pleasant feeling, very dear and wished to last, fades away. He fails to see the truth of non-*atta* or *anatta* because he is shrouded by the darkness of ignorance (*avijja*). Being ignorant, he clings to the five aggregates as his own self, he takes as "I" he believes them as his own. This clinging is the result of craving (*taṇhā*) and wrong view (*ditthi*).

(That is how wrong view arises).

(Q) How is the wrong view dispelled (ended)?

(A) The moment one discerns by Knowledge of Right View that although apparently manifested as one's body, the five aggregates are not one's own self but are only impermanent, painful (*dukkha*) and not-self in character, the shroud of ignorance is suddenly lifted. Instantaneously, craving and wrong view are dispelled and the resultants that accrue from the self-same defilements (i.e., ignorance, craving and wrong view) become extinct. Once wrong view is dispelled, doubts (*vicikicchā*) about the Buddha, the *Dhamma* and the *Sanghā* are also dispelled automatically.

Further, the distinction between *Sakkāya ditthī* or *atta ditthi*, and *vicikiccā* should be mentioned here:-

1. Stubborn belief in the existence of a self in mind-and-matter composed of the five aggregates that is me, this is mine, this is my own self, is *sakkāya ditthi* or *attaditthi*.
2. Doubting whether mind-and-matter composed of the five aggregat-es are my self or whether they are not my self, is called *vicikicchā*.

Of the above two, when either of them is dispelled, the other automatically vanishes. When these wrong views vanish one is established on the Path, and Stream-entry and advanced stages of enlightenment are attained to.

(That is how wrong view vanishes).

The Profundity of Not-self or *'Anatta'*

Anatta is the *dhamma* declared by the Buddha alone: this *dhamma* as a doctrine prevails only while the Teaching of the Buddha is extant.

Except during the period of the arising of the Buddha, the characteristic of not-self is not understood, says *Sammoha Vinodanī Attḥakathā. (Anatta lakkhanem vinā buddhuppāda na paññayati*).

That is why outside of a Buddha's *sāsāna* one can never aspire to the Path. Even during the *sāsanā*, the Path is not attainable unless one discerns the not-self as a characteristic of sentient existence. In other words, the Path-knowledge can be attained to only on abandoning the wrong view of self.

It was only when the Buddha discoursed *anattalakkhana* (recorded as *Anattalakkhana Sutta*) that the world first learnt *anatta*, the not-self character of the five aggregates.

Before the coming of the Buddha all worldlings among men, *devas* or Brahmas believed in a self, i.e., they firmly believed that there is "I", this self is mine, it is my own, it is under my control, with the result that sentient beings are subjected to the hazards of rebirth, mostly in the four miserable states of *apāya*.

That being so, it behoves well that the reader abandon self, the wrong belief in *atta*, as taught by the Buddha in *Anattalakkhana Sutta*, and discard wrong view (*ditthi*) and doubts (*vicikicchā*).

The Meaning of '*Anatta*' in a Nutshell

Mind-and-matter are devoid of substance or essence. There is no self there. They are not at one's command. They are not at one's disposal. That is why they are not-self, *anatta*. (Commit this to memory).

Contemplating '*Anatta*': per Commentary

The fact of being unable to stem ageing, disease and death, i.e., the impermanency of all compounded things, makes it obvious that there is no self. (For, if there were a self, such impermanency should have been stemmed).

The ill and un-satisfactoriness (*dukkha*) of all compounded things also make it obvious that there is no self. (For, if there were a self *dukkha* should have been willed against).

The fact that one is unable to wish for and get permanency and freedom from *dukkha* makes it obvious that there is no self. (For, if there were a self such a wish should certainly have been fulfilled). Put it in another way, the five aggregates, however apparently manifested as one's body, through their impermanence, painfulness and not-self show clearly that they are *anatta*, not anybody's possession.

What the *Sammohavinodani Atthakatha* Commentary has stated above can be verified by oneself as follows:

"Contemplate how in advancing years one has lost one's teeth, one's hair has turned gray, and one's memory has failed. Contemplate how youth has vanished, and with it the handsome looks". Where is the beauty now?

Contemplating thus, impermanence will have become quite obvious.

Then consider one's own mind. If you do so, you will find your mind wishing for an everlasting youth and beauty, and wishing against ageing, disease and death. Then you will realize that your mind's wish goes unfulfilled and absolutely disregarded. This again is evidence of not-self or *anatta*. Then it will dawn on you that although apparently manifested as your body, the compounded aggregates are actually not your self, not your own. Seeing thus, craving for existence (*bhava taṇhā*) will vanish. Wrong view of self (*atta*) and being (*satta*) - personality - belief (*sakkāya diṭṭhi*) will die a natural death. Doubts (*vicikicchā*) will be no more. You will then be fitting for 'entering the Stream', and get established in the Path.

(End of the meaning of *Anatta*).

Don't Miss the Essence:

The Buddha had to acquire the ten perfection (*pāramis*) over four *asankheyyas* and a hundred thousand *kappas*; a *paccekabuddha*, over two *asankheyyas* and a hundred thousand *kappas*; a Chief Disciple or *Mahāsāvaka*, over one *asankheyyas* and a hundred thousand *kappas*. To what end? To attain to the Four Noble Truths. Why? Because it is only knowledge of the Four Noble Truths that leads to the realization of *Nibbana*, which makes one secure against the hazards of repeated (birth), ageing, disease and death and the natural tendency of all worldlings to fall into the four miserable states (*apāya*). One should therefore follow the example of those Noble Ones who have entered *Nibbana* and strive for the knowledge of the Truth.

The knowledge can be had only when a Buddha arises and declares the Four Noble Truths. Now is such a time. This opportunity is ours. And we have earned it with our previous merits. If we are to avail ourselves of this golden opportunity and do ourselves real service we should straight away take up the practice diligently without wasting precious time in other trifling pursuits. Yes, let us practise for the knowledge:

And as for attaining this Knowledge of the Truth, there is none better easily understood than *Dhammacakka Sutta*. It declares succinctly: (a) that the train of the

world's woes (*dukkha*) beginning with birth is caused by craving; and (b) that craving can be brought to an end by the practice shown as the Path, thus putting an end to *dukkha*. In these two simple statements the Four Noble Truths are revealed in a straight forward manner. The discourse is direct and short to the point. It is the way the previous *Buddhas* also declared the Truth. Hence, for attaining the Knowledge of Truth, the Four Noble Truths as taught in *Dhammacakka* should be learnt and put to practice; no other dilatory activities should hamper one's progress.

Furthermore, the present book-as also with *Sacca Dīpaka Kathā, Sotāpattī Magga Kathā, Ditthivicikicchā Pahātabba Kathā, Niyyānika Magga Kathā* and *Chadhatu Magga Kathā* - written in plain style on the subject, as taught in *Dhammacakka*, in a variety of presentations, should serve as manual for such practice.

(End of Introductory Exhortation)

Path-Knowledge (*magga* ñā*na*) and Fruition-Knowledge (*phala* ñā*na*)

Path-Knowledge means penetrative insight into the Four Noble Truths. Fruition-Knowledge means getting established in the Path Knowledge of the Truth.

(End of Introductory remarks by way of preliminary background knowledge for the practice).

The Plan of the Book

The plan of my undertaking in this book is as follows:-

1. First, an epitome of the Four Noble Truths.
2. Second, Purity of view (*diṭṭhivisuddhi*) or the level of non-delusion (*asammoha bhūmi*) will be expounded, distinguishing fact from fancy, i.e., the mistaken view about being (*satta*) and life (*jīva*) that do not exist in reality will be exposed, and the truth of *dukkha* explained.
3. Thirdly, the *kammic* force, the result of volitional actions (*kamma vipāka*) that has the effect of rebirth, and that is the significance of the cause if *dukkha* (*samudaya saccā*), will be explained fully so as to drive away doubts and gain Purification from Doubts (*kankhāvitarana visuddhi*).
4. Fourthly, the reality of *nibbāna* will be explained in terms of striking out the root and accomplishing the complete cessation of *dukkha*, thus establishing the Truth of Cessation, (*nīrodha saccā*).
5. Fifthly, the Eightfold Noble Path beginning with Right View (*sammāditthi*) will be expounded from the practical aspect of develop-ing insight (*vipssanā*).
6. Lastly, further ramification on the foregoing exposition will be made with the various approaches to mental culture for insight and more ela-borate discussions towards gaining supra-mundane knowledge (*lokutt-ara* ñ*ana*), with scriptural authority.

(Here ends the Introduction with author's undertaking, etc.).

Chapter One

An Exposition of the Four Noble Truths

(*Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambudhassa*).

Veneration to the Exalted One, the Homage-worthy, the Perfectly Self-Enlightened.

What are the Noble Truths?

In *Dhammacakka* as per *Vinaya, Mahā Vagga, etc.: Idam kho pana bhikkhave dukkham ariyasaccam jātīpi dukkhā jarāpi dukkhā vyādhipī dukkho maranampi dukkham appiyehi sampayogo dukkho piyehi vippayogo dukkho yampiecham na labhati tampi dukkham samkhittona pancuppāddānakkhandhā- pi dukkhā.*

(End of *dukkha saccā*).

Idam kho pana bhikkhave dukkhasamudayam ariyasaccam yā yam taṇhā ponobbhavikā nandi rāga sahagatā tatrā tatrabhinandinī seyyathidam kāmataṇhā bhavataṇhā vibbava taṇhā.

(End of *samudaya saccā*).

Idam kho pana bhikkhave dukkhanirodham ariyasaccam yo tassa yeva taṇhāya asesa virāganirodho cāgo patinissaggo mutti anālayo.

(End of *nirodha saccā*).

Idam kho pana bhikkhave dukkhanirodha gaminipaṭipadā ariya saccam, ayam'eva attḥangiko maggo seyyathidam sammāditthi sammāsankapppo sammāvācā sammākammanto sammā ajivo sammā vāyamo sammāsati sammāsamādhi.

(End of *magga saccā*).

The Meaning of *Saccā*

Bhikkhus, birth is *dukkha*, ageing is *dukkha*, disease is *dukkha*, and death is *dukkha*. (Grief, lamentation, pain, distress and despair are *dukkha*). Association with the unpleasant such as adverse activities, or sight, sound or other objects of sense, is *dukkha*. Separation from the pleasant such as those dear to one, or favorite activities is *dukkha*. Not getting what one wishes - (more particularly), the desire to be free from the painful process of birth, ageing, disease, death, sorrow, lamentation, anxiety, etc., that always go unfulfilled - is *dukkha*. In brief, the five aggregates of clinging are *dukkha*. And this, indeed, a whole set of twelve kinds of painfulness beginning with birth, is *dukkha*, the Noble Truth that an *ariyā* or a Noble One must know.

The essence is: in truth and reality there exist none but the five aggregates that constitute *dukkha*. Any clinging to a deluded self must be discarded, knowing by contemplation that there is no such thing as person or being apart from the five aggregates.

The Characteristics, etc., of the Noble Truth of Suffering (*Dukkha Saccā*)

The characteristic, (*lakkhaṇa*), function (*rasa*), and manifestation (*paccupatthāna*) *dukkha* will be described now.

Dukkha has the characteristic of afflicting or oppressing. Its function or business is to torment or inflame. It is manifested in birth, etc., or becoming, etc.

Bādhanalakkhaṇam dukkhasaccam santappana rasam pavattipaccu patthanam:

-*VissuddhiMagga, Vol. II*, p. 126 *ff.*

From the above quotation we see that *dukkha* is present where arising or becoming is present. Where there is no arising or becoming there is no *dukkha*. Since craving is the cause or origin of birth, it is required of one taking up religious practice to abandon craving. To do that one should reflect on one's body, its birth, etc., to discern the *dukkha* present therein.

Once *dukkha* is discerned therein,

Craving falls away and

The mind is inclined to cessation

Which is Path-consciousness.

When birth, etc., are seen through *vipassanā* insight as *dukkha*, the *yogi's* mind turns to *Nibbāna* that is devoid of birth. This is Path-consciousness. It roots out craving. Thus the Path is attained.

Dukkha should be understood in two ways: obvious pain (*muchadukkha*) and causally or necessarily painful (*pariyāyadukkha*). On this point the *Attha -kathā* (*Sammohavinodanī*) discriminates three kinds of feeling: pleasant, unpleasant and neutral:-

1. Bodily pain and mental pain, by their terminology and nature, are obvious pain; hence they are called *muchadukkha*;
2. Pleasant feeling, by its instability and corruptibility is bound to vanish, thereby causing distress; hence it is called *viparināmadukkha*.
3. Neutral feeling (i.e., neither pleasant nor unpleasant) and all things that happen to arise in the three broad states or spheres of existence* are subject to the law of arising and vanishing (*udayabbaya*); hence they are perpetually oppressed by decay. They are therefore called *sankhāra dukkha*. The thought-processes in Path-consciousness also are in this category.

Thus *muchadukkha* should be distinguished from *pariyayadukkha*.

Tattha kāyikacetasikā dukkhavedanā sabhāvato ca nāmato ca dukkhattā dukkha dukkham nāma.

Sukhavedanā viparināmena dukkhhuppattihetuko viparināmadukkham nāma.

Upekkhāvedanā ceva avasesā ca tebhumakasankharā udayabbayapiḷita- ṭthā sankhāradukkham nāma. Tathā piḷanam nāma maggaphalānampi atthi tasmā ete dhammā dukkhasacca pariyāpannattena sankhāra dukkham nāmāti veditabbo.

Thapetvā dukkhadukkham sesam dukkha saccāvibhange agatam jātiādi sabbamppi tassa dukkhassa vatthu bhāvato pāriyāyadukkham nāma.

Dukkhadukkham nippariyāyadukkham nāma tattha pariyāyadukkham nippariyāya dukkhanti imasmim padadvaye thatva dukkham ariyasaccam kathetabbam.

Considering the pervasive nature of *dukkha*, it is to *dukkha* that a *yogi* should turn for contemplation: he would be wasting his time if he were to contemplate on other *dhammas* that he fancies. The group of five ascetics won enlightenment on comprehending *dukkha*. They won 'stream-entry' by abandoning craving after understanding *dukkha* and the sense of urgency and remorse that accompanies such understanding.

The five aggregates that exist in one should be properly acquainted with. They are described below.

Twenty elements of extension (*pathavi*) beginning with hair of head; twelve elements of cohesion or fluidity (*āpo*) beginning with bile; four elements of heat or cold (*tejo*) beginning with *santappana tejo*; six elements of motion

* 'The three broad states or spheres of existence:' Sentient Sphere (*kāmaloka*), consisting of seven fortunate and four unfortunate states; sphere of Fine Materiality (*rupaloka*) consisting of 16 *Brahma lokas*, and Formless or non-materiality sphere (*arupa loka*) consisting of 4 *Brahma lokas*. These 3 broad spheres make up the 31 planes of existence.

(or wind element) beginning with the wind element of rising (*uddhangama vāyo*), making a total of forty-two aspects or divisions or *kotthāsas*. These divisions together with eye, ear, nose, tongue, body-sensitivity and mind-base (*hadaya*), make up matter or materiality (*rūpa*).

As the text puts it:

Rūpam accetano avyākato suñño nissatto najjīvo:

Matter has no - volition or will, it lacks consciousness. Again, matter has the character of change due to heat or cold, etc., (*ruppanalahkhanam rūpam*). Matter is inert, lifeless. It is a mere tool in the service of mind (*nāma*).

(That is the meaning of *rūpa*, matter)

Mind (*nāma*) is so called because it inclines to or takes cognizance of its objects: *Namana lakkhanam nāman*. There are four groups or aggregates of *nāma*. They are:

Vedanā or feeling which feels pleasant, unpleasant or neutral sensations. *Vedanakkhandhā*, therefore, is the aggregate of feeling.

Saññā, or perception which perceives or takes note of objects of mind. *Saññakkhandhā* means the mental aggregate of perception.

Fifty other mental concomitants (i.e., other than *vedanā* and *sañña*, that go to make fifty-two altogether), are called the aggregate of mental formations, *sankhārakkhandhā*. These mental properties are called *sankhāra*, because they 'condition' their resultants. Mental properties that cause greed, hatred and delusion are un-wholesome 'conditioners' (*akusalahetu*) that send one to the four miserable states (*apāya*). On the other hand, non-greed, non-hatred and non -delusion are wholesome 'conditioners' (*kusalahetu*) that send one to the fortunate states of the human world, the *deva* world or the *brahmā* world. Again, the eighty-nine classes of consciousness (*citta*) constitute the aggregate of consciousness (*viññanakkhandhā*) ("*cittam viññanakkhandho*").

Because it is conscious of the object of the mind, it is called *viññana* (*vijānānakkhandam viññānam*). Mind is the forerunner of all deeds good or bad (*manopubbangamā dhammā*).

"By mind the world (of sentient beings) is led,

By mind is drawn;

The sovereignty of mind conceded by all men,

devas and *Brahmās*."

Cittena niyati'loka cittena parikassati

Cittassa ekadhammassa sabbeva vasa anvagu.

- *Sagāthā Vagga, Samyutta Nikāya*, p. 36.

The Buddha declares all *viññana* (or *citta*) , mental concomitants and matter as suffering or painful (*dukkha*) because all of them are impermanent, painful and not - self , and because they are devoid of life, inanimate:

(End of *dukkha saccā*)

2. Now this, *Bhikkhus*, is the noble Truth of the cause or origin of *dukkha*. Indeed, it is that craving which tends to rebirth, which is accompanied by pleasure and lust, seeking satisfaction, now here, now there; namely, the craving for sensual pleasures (*kāma taṇhā*) the craving for existence (*bhavataṇhā*) the craving for non-existence (*vibhavataṇhā*), i,e., hereafter, (implying seeking the greatest happiness here and now).

The Characteristic, etc., of the origin of *Dukkha*, that is, *Samudayasaccā*.

The origin or cause (*samudaya*) of *dukkha* has these characteristic, function and manifestation: -

"The origin of *dukkha*, i.e., craving, is characterized by rebirth (*jāti*) and its consequences, the source of all woes and unsatisfactoriness. It is the function of craving to be always bonded with *dukkha* (*anubandhana*). It is manifested, (on gaining insight) , in its unsatedness". (*pabhāva lakkhanam samudayasaccam dukkha anubandhanarasam atitthi paccupatthānam*) .

-*Vibhanga Atthakathā* p. 79.

Question and Answer

(Q). Who is responsible for the arising of birth and its consequent woes (*dukkha*)?

(A). In the ultimate sense of the *Dhamma*, craving is responsible, i.e. , craving for sensual pleasure, craving for existence, craving for non-existence, craving for material form, craving for sounds, craving for smells, craving for flavors, craving for bodily sensations, craving for ideas and thoughts. Or speaking on each individual case, it is craving for existence and allied cravings.

Note: It is one of the six attributes of the *Dhamma* that the *Dhamma*, even though expounded for general application, is to be understood by the wise (i.e., those who have gained insight-knowledge), each one for himself: *paccattam veditabbo viññūhi*. Knowing thus, one can remove doubts.

Here, the removal of doubts is concerned with the doubt about the cause-effect nature of Truth. If *dukkha* is to be overcome, its cause or origin must be cut off completely. If one succeeds in doing so, there is no condition that is going to bring rebirth. Once the process of rebirth is stopped, no train of woes arises, and that is *Nibbāna*. When the *yogi* discerns this he entertains no uncertainty about the cessation of *dukkha*. Accordingly, he can readily see the reality of *Nibbāna*. In other words, he himself has realized *Nibbāna*. This realiz- ation dispels any doubts whatsoever and puts an end, once and for all, to any wrong view. He knows by own insight that he has become a Noble One or *ariyā*, such as a Stream-winner, etc.

(Here ends the discussion on craving, the Origin of *dukkha*).

The Noble Truth of Cessation of *Dukkha* (*dukkhanirodha ariyasaccā*), which all those aspiring to *ariyāhood* or attaining the Path must comprehend, is the extinction or all compounded phenomena, the realization of the un-compound, the un-made (*Nibbāna*).

3. Now this, *Bhikkhus*, is the Noble Truth of the cessation of *dukkha.* Indeed, it is the complete disappearance and cessation of that very craving for sensual pleasure, etc., the giving it up, the abandoning it, the release from it, the detachment from it. (i.e., *Nibbāna* with no remainder of existence or *anuppāda*- *nibbāna*).

The Characteristic, etc., of the Truth of Cessation (*Nirodhasaccā*)

Nibbāna (i.e., cessation) is characterized by Peace or Tranquillity due to an absence of the eleven fires of passion.* Put in another way, it is characterized by non-arising or non-becoming of existence, the fount of *dukkha* resulting from craving. In other words, it is characterized by the disappearance of the process of arising (*uppāda*), development or manifestation (*thī*) dissolution (*banga*) that condition all existence. Its function is to stabilize, that is to say, it provides the security to those who are annoyed by or disgusted with the dreadful round of rebirths. It is manifested, (on gaining insight) by 'uncoditioned-ness' (*animitta*) which means being free from the

three principal attributes (marks) of existence, namely: passion (*rāga*) hatred (*dosa*) and delusion (*moha*).

To sum up, *nibbāna*, unlike mind-and-matter that are composed of five aggregates, is not subject to arising, becoming, vanishing. *Nibbāna* has the character of peace, non - becoming, non-conditioned.

What is meant here is:

Nibbāna is none other than cessation of *dukkha*. And cessation of *dukkha* is none other than a total extinction of craving, or where craving does not arise. Where craving does not arise there are no aggregates of existence (*animitta*). In other words, no rebirth occurs (*ajāta*), no arising, no happening (*anuppāda*), the process of arising - developing-dissolution is stopped (*asankhata*). Craving is present only in the five aggregates, whose attributes are

* 'The eleven fires of passion':- lust, hate, delusion, birth, ageing, death, grief, lamentation, pain, sorrow, anguish.

passion, hatred and delusion. Attachment is present only in the conditioned existence of the five aggregates as men, *devas* or *Brahmās*. Where no attributes of existence are present there is no attachment, for there is none to be attached to. *Nibbāna* therefore is the ultimate *dhamma* that is totally without craving, where craving has ceased, where craving has been given up, abandoned, completely detached. This is the cessation, the non-recurrence of birth, the absence of attributes of existence, the unconditioned, that the Noble ones must comprehend. This is *Nirodhasaccā*.

(End of explanation of *nirodhasaccā*).

Now this, *Bhikkhus*, is the Noble Truth of the way leading to the cessation of *dukkha*. Indeed, it is the Noble Eightfold path (or the path with eight constituents). Namely; Right Understanding (*sammādiṭṭhi*) of the Four Noble Truths, Right Thought (*sammāsankappa*) i.e., thinking about the release from round of rebirths, Right Speech (*sammāvācā*) that abstains from the four kinds of unwholesome verbal action, Right Action (*sammākāmmanta*) that abstains from the three kinds of unwholesome bodily action, Right Livelihood (*sammā-ājivā*), Right Endeavor

(*sammāvāyāma*), Right Mindfulness (*sammā- sati*), Right Concentration (*sammāsamādhi*).

This verily is the eightfold path or course of conduct that leads to the cassation of *dukkha*, where no birth occurs, that the Noble One must compreh- end.

The characteristic, etc., of the Path or *Maggasaccā*

The Path has the characteristic of 'conduction' or conveying one out of *samsāra*. Its function is to destroy the defilements (*kilesa*), such as lust, hatred delusion, etc. It is manifested, (on gaining insight), by rising i.e., Liberation from the round of rebirth (*niyyāna lakhanam magga saccam kilesapphan- arasam vutthāna paccupaṭṭhānam).*

-*Vibhanga Atthakathā*, p. 80.

The essence here is: destroying the defilements through the Path-knowledge means the understanding-wisdom to see that *dukkha* has its source or origin craving.

This wisdom or knowledge dispels the ignorance of the Truth and the lust for life which are the (prime) defilements. And the disappearance of these defilements in itself is the accomplishment on the path. It means the same saying that the defilements are destroyed through the Path-Knowledge.

* (The author exhorts the reader to memorize the text (Pali) and the meaning of Four Noble Truths).

(End of explanation on *Maggasaccā*).

To summarize the Four Noble Truths

Craving is the origin or cause of the five aggregates of existence, uprooting craving through the Path-Knowledge has the effect of cessation of the aggregates (of existence). The ultimate sense here is, *dukkha* has its cause in craving; cut off craving, and there ends this *dukkha*. No being or person is there to go into extinction. Viewing thus, one steers clear of eternalist view (*sassata vāda*) and annihilationist view (*uccheda vāda*).

How the Four Noble Truths May Be Discerned

Through craving for existence, rebirth and its consequent mass of suffering arise. Abandoning that craving, *dukkha* is cut off at its source.

In other way:

"Through craving *dukkha* arises; abandon craving, and *dukkha* ceases".

If one desires cessation, contemplate on all arising (uprising) of all manifestations of existence-i.e., the five aggregates; the sense-bases-as being impermanent, ill, impersonal (not-self), subject to ageing, death, all of them *dukkha* in its manifold aspects.

On gaining Right Understanding thus, craving fades away and so do all fetters (*samyojanā*) that bind one to *samsāra*.

When craving dies, rebirth ends and the consequent sufferings cease.

Remember, it is the fuel and the wick that keep the flame burning.

Exhaust the fuel and the wick, and no flame over rises.

Similarly, where the cause, the fetters such as craving cease the result, i.e., rebirth and all forms of *dukkha*, cease.

This is how the Perfectly Self-Enlightened One (*sammāsambuddha*) illustrates the Truth.

Where the Cause Ceases, No Result Ever Arises.

"With the *Arahats* there is no craving for future existence. To them there is no kammic force (beyond the present existence), and no future kammic force is created. Since there is no potential force of kammic seed, no desire for the flourishing of any future existence remains. Just like the lamp's flame is extinguished on the exhaustion of fuel and wick, the aggregates of the *arahat*, whose mind is free from restlessness and is therefore of right concentration, are extinguished at death when he passes away to *Nibbāna*".

(*Khīnam purānam nava natthi sambhavam*

virattacitta yatike bhavasmim.

Te khīnabījā aviruḷhīchandā

nibbanti ḍhīrā yathāyam padīpo.)

- *Sutta Nipāta,* v.238

From the above quotation, rebirth ceases when craving, volition or *kamma* and restlessness or distractedness disappear, just like a flame going out when the fuel and the wick are used up.

Delusion implies two kinds of consciousness: doubt (*vicikicchā*) and restlessness (*uddhacca*). The former is uprooted on attaining Stream-entry, the latter is extinguished only when *arahatta magga* is attained. *Arahats* have extirpated restlessness, so their minds are in a state of right concentration. This prevents the cause of rebirth from arising at their death. Hence on the breaking up of the five aggregates that constitute their existence they enter *nibbāna* instead of proceeding to a fresh existence.

The simile is: when the fuel and the wick that keeps the flame burning are used up, the flame dies. Similarly, when the defilements that cause rebirth are extinguished, the process of rebirth is ended. When the cause is exhausted the resultant (*dukkha*) can rise no more. All *dukkha* comes to an end: that is the realization of *nibbāna*.

Being deluded and not discerning the Truth,

Craving, clinging and *kamma* (action)

Conjointly cause rebirth and the attendant *Dukkha*.

On seeing the Truth, craving is abandoned,

No resultant of rebirth accrues, *dukkha* ceases.

Contemplating the Present *Dukkha*, It's Origin,

Its Cessation that is Walking the Path.

Craving, in the past existence, has resulted in the five aggregates at present which is a bundle of *dukkha*. This is the Truth. The present aggregates are viewed as permanent, pleasant and one's own self so that one is led to believe, 'it is me', 'it is myself', 'it is my own'. Attachment to present existence and wrong view of self become fetters, made even stronger by getting into wedlock and rearing a family. These activities are the present cause for *dukkha*. The cessation of the present

craving means cessation of *dukkha* here and now. By cultivating the mind not to succumb to this present craving through persistent contemplation on the evils of rebirth, etc., is the practice according to the Path. When one is thus conscious of the evils of *dukkha* here and now, craving ceases completely. At which instant does it cease? It ceases at the precise moment when feeling (arising through contact) is not allowed to develop into craving. The Buddha and *arahats* do not allow this to happen. This is why at the dissolution of the present body, no rebirth arises and they enter *nibbāna*.

(End of a brief exposition of the Four Truths).

A Single Consciousness of Cessation of Craving Accomplishes the Four Functions of the Path-knowledge.

Having gained the knowledge of the Four Noble Truths through learning, one needs to advance to gaining knowledge of the same through insight, which is the practice according to the Path. One should contemplate on *dukkha* and its cessation, the consequent *nibbāna* and its tranquillity, the joy at cessation, thus accomplishing four functions simultaneously. Herein, the arising of birth is to be contemplated as *dukkha*. The non-arising or cessation is to be contemplated as *nibbāna sukha* or the well-being (happiness) that is *nibbāna*. Joy at non-arising or cessation is the Path-knowledge or Path-consciousness.

How does joy in cessation accomplish the four functions of the Path?

1. *Uppādo dukkham*: "arising is suffering (painful)", when one takes joy at non-arising or cessation of phenomena, i.e., when one abandons craving for existence that tends to rebirth, then one comes to realize that this existence is veritably *dukkha*, for it is subject to arising (and dissolution). Thus the realization of the Truth of *dukkhasaccā* is accomplished.
2. When one takes joy at cessation the lust for life or *bhavataṇhā* is abandoned.

3. Once the craving for existence (*bhavataṇhā*) is abandoned cessation of *dukkha* is realized, i.e., one is 'face to face with' cessation. This is because rebirth can occur only when craving is present and when that craving is absent, there is no occasion for its resultant to arise.
4. The fact of having thus ceased, or the absence of *dukkha*, means *nibbāna*. Joy at that nature of things which necessarily means a complete disinterest in having any mind-body aggregate or, path-consciousness of total absence of clinging, and that is the precise moment when the Path is entered or the Path-knowledge is gained. In this way four functions of the Path are simultaneously accomplished, namely: the understanding of *dukkha* as the ultimate truth; the eradica- tion of craving; the realization of (getting 'face to face with'), cessation, and the cultivation of the Knowledge thus gained through insight, i.e., direct-knowledge, as distinct from knowledge learned from others.

It is like lighting up a lamp in a dark room: the burning of the wick by the flame, the dispelling of darkness, the flashing of light and the lessening of fuel by consumption-these four things happen simultaneously the instant the lamp is lit.

The above exposition will be put in Question-and-answer form for better comprehension:-

(Q). What is the cause of rebirth in all the thirty-one planes of existence?

(A). It is caused by craving-craving for sensual pleasure, craving for existence, etc.

(Q). How does craving arise?

(A). It arises from ignorance, the inherent lack of knowledge of the Four Noble Truths.

(Q). How does ignorance or denseness work? In what manner does it shroud one in darkness?

(A). In any form of existence, mind-and-matter that constitute the body arise, come into existence and decay. Ageing and death are ever present there. That is the impermanent nature inherent in all compounded things. Nobody wants to

grow old or to die, yet ageing and death happen to us against our wish. This is the inherent nature of compounded things. It is just because we do not pay heed to what is obviously there - these characteristics of impermanence and not self - that we fail to see them. Although apparently manifested as one's own body, mind-and-matter constituting our body is not ours. This hard truth is clouded by the darkness of our own ignorance or inherent paucity of right understanding. That is why we are so fond of ourselves.

(Q). If one acquires Right Understanding and sees through the mistaken concepts, perceptions and knowledge, could craving for existence ever arise?

(A). No. It may be illustrated thus: very good fare, tainted with (undetected) excreta, is mouth-watering when the fact of such taint is not known to you. Once you come to detect that it is so tainted, you won't care to touch it, not to speak of eating it. Just as darkness is gone when light appears, Right Understanding lifts the shroud of darkness that has been keeping us in gross ignorance. Just as a man who has all along been enamored of a she-demon in the guise of a pretty girl discovered the true nature and got rid of her immediately, so also one who gains Right Understanding through insight forsakes the craving for existence. Hence, the composite body of matter (such as hair, etc., eye, ear, tongue, limbs, organs) and mind (such as feeling, perception, mental formations and consciousness), in spite of its apparent manifestation as one's own, is in truth and reality not one's own, not a self, since it cannot be prevented by one's will from growing old or falling sick or dying. Seeing the true nature of one's body as being impermanent, painful and not-self, craving for existence dies out instantaneously. When craving dies out, one does not go on doing volitio- nal activities that carry the seed of rebirth. In other words, once craving is rooted out, *kamma*-forming activities are abandoned.

(Q). If craving is no more, and *kamma*-formations are not committed, can rebirth occur?

(A). No. The cause has been rooted out, so there can arise no resultant.

For example: the candle flame can last only so long as the candle lasts.

Similarly, rebirth or fresh becoming can take its course only so long as there is craving. Forsake craving, and there can arise no rebirth.

Hetu nirodhā phalanirodho: when cause ceases result (fruit) is no more. Hence, when birth ceases, ageing and death are no more. Put in another way, birth is caused by craving, clinging and volitional acts. Abandon these causes, i.e., stop committing

volitional activities or *kamma* motivated by craving, then there is no resultant by way of rebirth. When one is convinced, through insight, of the truth of this cause-resultant *dhamma* one attains the Path.

To epitomize it:

Because one craves for being,

Rebirth and attendant ills occur.

Forsake the craving,

And no ills ever can arise.

Herein, craving for being is the cause. The resulting five aggregates, beginning with birth, are *dukkha*. Abandoning craving through cultivation of mind by reflecting (constantly) on the impermanent, painful and impersonal or not-self nature of the aggregates is the practice of Path. The cessation of rebirth and the non-arising of the aggregates is cessation of *dukkha* which is *nibbāna*.

When one clearly sees the four-fold truth above without a shred of doubt, one gains the first Path-knowledge and is classed a 'Steam-enterer' or *sotāpana* among the *ariyas* (Noble Ones).

Wrong Objective in Practice Brings Great Loss

(Q). A certain person set his mind on being born in the formless sphere (*arūpabhūmi*) of Neither-perception-nor-non-perception (*nevasaññā nas- saññā*)* *Brahma loka*, with a life-span of 84000 *kappas* or *aeons* and achieves his objective (on his death). Another person bent his efforts on the cessation of *dukkha* and also achieves his objectives: he attains to cessation of rebirth. Of the two who is the winner and who the loser?

* *Nevasaññā nasaññā*: *Saññā* in this context is a Jhanic consciousness too subtle to be ascertainable. It is only the province of the Buddha to ascertain it.

(A). (I) He who is born an *arūpa Brahmā* is the loser because in spite of his immensely long duration of peace in that *Brahma loka* he is not precluded from woeful existences beyond that life-span.

(ii) He who attains *nibbāna* through attaining to cessation of *dukkha* is the winner because he has been liberated from *dukkha* (i.e., rebirth etc.,) forever.

17. On which authority is answer based?

(A). It is based on *Patisambhidā Magga* wherein it is said, "Arising means *dukkha*, non-arising or cessation, peace (*sukha*)".

(*Uppādo dukkha anuppādo sukham*).

Where *Dukkha* Lies and How It Ceases

(Q). Where do all sorts of *dukkha* lie? How or where do they cease?

(A). All sorts of *dukkha* lie in one's own body, a composite of five aggregates (*khandhā*), and a six-fold set of sense-bases (*āyatana*). Once the aggregates come to a cessation and the sense-bases are no more, there is no basis or seat for *dukkkha*. *Nibbāna* means just this disappearance of the attributes of existence (*khandha nimitta*) where *dukkha* is firmly seated.

In other words, the five aggregates with the six sense-bases is the basis or seat of *dukkha*; when the basis or seat disappear *dukkha* is ended.

In other words, when there is birth, ageing and death follow; when the process of birth is stopped no ageing and death can ever arise.

In other words, the flame burns in the five aggregates with the six sense-bases; when the basis (mind-and-matter) goes extinct, the eleven fires* of existence are quelled and that is the tranquillity of *nibbāna*.

In a nutshell: *Uppādo dukkham anuppādo sukham*: where the process of arising exists *dukkha* dwells in the aggregates thus arisen. Once the process is stopped, *dukkha* disappears, release from *dukkha* is affected. This cessation of *dukkha* is *nibbāna*.

* 'Eleven fires'; see f. n.*, page 27 ante.

How Impermanence, Ill and Not-self May Be Discerned Through Self-analysis.

For the cessation of three reciprocating resultants (*ti vaṭṭaka*) continuous contemplation on the impermanence, painfulness and impersonality or not-self character of existence is needed. How this contemplation on the body should proceed is described below.

If you are deluded into thinking that the five aggregates and the six sense-bases that constitute your body is lasting, that it is pleasurable, or that it is your own self, ponder on the fact that however much you might wish them to be youthful, healthful, and everlasting, or immortal, you are helpless, for your wish is never fulfilled. You have no control, in the real sense, ever your body. If the body were really your own self it would certainly obey your will. Therefore it is quite obvious that what you thought your self is actually no self at all. It does not belong to you in truth, and reality. Only apparently is the body your and this apparent self a delusion, for it is not-self actually. If you are keen enough to perceive this factual truth, how would you be enamored of it? How would craving, wrong view of self and stark ignorance mislead you any more? And in such case, how could such defilements as passion, hate and delusion arise? If the recurrence of defilements (*kilesa vaṭta*) is stopped, how could the Path remain beyond your reach here and now? Joyous indeed it is to discern the truth of impermanence, painfulness, not-self, that this body is more mind-and-matter, averitable dwelling house of *dukkha*. There is no joy that surpasses this joy. And there is no method of approach to discern this Noble Truth of *dukkha* that is as simple and effective as the above said method.

This method is effective because it lifts the shroud of ignorance that has deluded you over beginning-less *samsāra*, and enables you to see the Path by direct knowledge.

When the defilements of ignorance, craving and wrong view, consisting of wrong concepts, wrong attachment, and wrong belief, are no more in your heart, how could

you commit volitional acts that tend to rebirth? In other words, how could *kamma* is formed any more? This round of *kammic* force (*kamma vaṭṭa*) also must necessarily come to a stop. And when there is no *kammic* potential, due to extinction of defilements, how could resultant round of births (*vipaka vaṭṭa*) occur again? How could a tree grow when there is no soil, no moisture and no seed-germ? And freedom from the three reciprocating rounds of defilements, *kamma* and resultant (becoming) (*vivaṭṭa*) is none other than *nibbāna*, it should be noted. In other words, this *vivaṭṭa nibbāna* means freedom from every from of unfulfilled desire such as unwelcome events that happen to one, the passing away of cherished thing; youth that is fast fading away; sickness, death, unpleasant sights, sound, smells, tastes, or touch that one must put up with; desirable sights, sound, smell, tastes, or touch that one misses; unwelcome heat or cold; hazards, cares and worries; being unable to be in contact with mental and physical wellbeing (*sukha*), and joy; being impinged upon by mental and physical pain; the much-dreaded, miserable states of *apāya* ever beckoning to you.

Contemplating On the Full Significance of the Text on the Four Noble Truths

The close literal meaning of the text that describes the Four Noble Truths should be pondered well in the following manner.

(Q). How should one ponder on the full significance of the Text which describes the Four Noble Truths?

(A). In *Satipaṭṭhana Sutta* and *Dhammacakka Sutta* the Text reads:-

"*Dukkha ariya saccā"*

"*Dukkahasamudaya ariya saccā"*

"*Dukkahanirodha ariya saccā"*

"*Dukkhanirodha gāminipatipadā ariya saccā*."

Note that the Four Truths were not just (the usually shortened from of) *dukkha saccā, samudaya saccā, nirodha saccā, maggasaccā*. The text as taught by the Buddha puts them in full as quoted above. This is because the full significance can be known only in fully-described from.

Sumudaya saccā has been defined as '*Samudeti uppādetīti samudayo*': 'because it causes arising it is called cause, *samudaya*.' Herein, when we refer to only *samudaya* the meaning is just 'causing to arise'. We cannot straight away know whether it is pain or pleasure that is caused to arise. When completely stated, as per the Text, as *Dukkhasamudaya ariya saccā*, we know straight away that it is pain, *dukkha*, that is caused to arise.

Similarly, *Nirodha saccā* is defined as '*Nirujhatiti nirodha'*: 'because it ceases or is destroyed it is called cessation, *nirodha'*. Herein, cessation by itself does not say whether it is pain or pleasure that ceases. When the term *Dukkhanirodha ariya saccā* is stated in full, and examined closely, the meaning is precise - that it is *dukkha* (pain) that ceases. It leads to a straight understanding that by *dukkha* is meant the five aggregates, and that by cessation is meant the non-recurrence of birth, the non-arising of the *khandhā*, aggregates, that is *nibbāna*.

Again, *Magga saccā* is defined as:

'*kilese mārento nibbānam gacchatīti maggo*': 'because it leads to *nibbāna* after having destroyed the defilements, it is called the way, the Path, *magga'*. The Path's meaning here is not precise, for it lacks how it leads to *nibbāna*. It is only when we say and note the significance of the full description, *Dukkhanirodhegaminī patipadā ariya saccā*, we get the needed answer - that it leads to *nibbāna* through cessation of *dukkha*, and that it is through the practice of the path that *dukkha* ceases. Hence, the need to ponder on the full description of the Truth.

Through attending to the cessation of *dukkha* according to the Noble Eightfold Path, cessation is attained to- *Etāya dukkhanirodham gacchati ārammanavasena*. (*Visuddhi Magga*, Vol. II P.126). From this quotation it is useful to note that *nibbāna* should first of all be understood as part of one's requisite learning (*anubhodha*).Having that fore-knowledge, one goes into contemplation of the birth-less (*ajāta*) *dukkha*-freed and peaceful nature of *nibbāna*, with a keen desire for its realization. With persistent practice, the knowledge learnt will develop into penetrative knowledge (*pativedha*) when the Path is attained (i.e., the matter of the Path is accomplished).

The Four Noble Truths in a Nutshell

Visuddhi Magga gives a 14-syllable epitome to memorize the significa- nce of the Four Noble Truths as follows:

1. *Pavatti*, being or coming into existence (of the *khandhā*, aggregates),
2. *Pavattaka*, the causation of coming into being or existence,
3. *Nivatti*, stoppage or cessation of existence,
4. *Nivattaka*, the causation of cessation (of existence) or practice for cessation.

The above fourteen syllables express concisely the Four Truths of (1) *dukk- ha*, (2) *dukkhasamudaya*, (3) *dukkhanirodha* (4) *dukkhanirodha gāminipatipadā*.

How One Comes To Be Called "One Endowed With Insight

Into The Four Noble Truths".

"Indeed, only when one discerns the real nature of the five aggregates by way of their coming into being, i.e., the cause, and by way of their cessation, that one is counted as a knower of the Truth. One never is so counted (considered) otherwise".

Tam panetam pavatti nivatti tadubhayahetū vasena dittham'eva saccaggahaṇam hoti, no aññathā

. (*Visuddhi Magga*)

The cessation of rebirth and the non-arising of the five aggregates is *nibbāna*. Cessation of rebirth means cessation of the delusion of identity (*puggala*): it is not unconditioned or unmade (*asankhata*) *nibbāna* yet. Only with the non-arising (after death) of the fresh process of arising-developing-dissolution that is *asankhata nibbāna*.

In *Dhammapada* it has been taught that "there is no suffering (*dukkha*) that is like the (five) aggregates" (*natthi khandhasamā dukkhā*). The coming into being of the aggregates of existence (*pavatti*) is *dukkha*. Craving that is the origin of existence is the cause (*pavattaka*). Put in another way, ignorance, craving, clinging and volitional acts or *kamma* combined are the origin or cause of *dukkha*. By *nivatti* is meant the final cessation without any remainder of existence (after death), *anupādisesa nibbāna*, where no rebirth is possible. By *nivattaka* is meant the practice of the Path beginning with Right Understanding.

Thus, without Pali the plain terms describing the Four Truths can be noted in these ten words (also numbering ten in Myanmar): "Existence;

The cause of existence;

Cessation;

The way of cessation".

Or to note, it is another way: *dukkha* is caused (by craving); when the cause is rooted out there is no resulting *dukkha*.

Or in another way:

"Because one craves for being,

Rebirth and all *dukkha* arise.

Abandon the craving,

And there ends *dukkha*".

The essence is a twofold presentation of the Truth (*saccā*), the causation aspect and the cessation aspect. In the former, craving for existence is the cause (*samudaya*) that produces rebirth and attendant ill (*dukkha*). In the latter, through the Path-practice (*magga*) of abandoning that cause (craving) rebirth (and all *dukkha*) cease (*nirodha*).

For gaining insight into the Truth in a direct way, i.e., by one's own experiencing one should contemplate the present body. One should keep being mindful of the truth the present existence, a veritable mass of *dukkha*, consisting of consciousness, mind-and-mater, the six sense-bases and contact or impingement through them of sense-objects and the feeling arising there from-are all resultants that have their origin or cause in past *Kamma*, functioning in association with ignorance, craving, and clinging. By clinging to the present existence (which in reality are only consciousness, mind-and-matter, the sense-base, contact and feeling), fresh cause for further becoming arise. This body, the resultant *khandhā* of past *kamma* must not therefore be received as one's own self; rather, it must be viewed, by constant contemplation, as impermanent, woeful and non-self. By such mindfulness craving does not follow feeling (*vedanā*) that arises on contact (at or through the sense-bases). When the line is drawn thus between feeling (*vedanā*) and craving (which always happen to the unmindful), the causative link between the two *dhammas* is broken. And the result is, no birth arises. This is the mannor how the Buddha and the *arahats* entered *nibbāna*.

For the worldlings (*puthujjana*) and 'those still in training for *arahatship'* (called *sekkha puggala*) craving follows feeling. However, craving may not develop into clinging (*upādāna*). As for the worldling or *puthujjana*, their craving tends to develop (naturally) into clinging. For, out of the eight unwholesome or immoral types of consciousness (*citta*) rooted in craving (attachment), their consciousness belongs to one of the four types of consciousness accompanied by wrong view (*diṭṭhigatā sampayutta cetasika*).The consequence is becoming (*bhavo*) and rebirth that sets *samsāra* rolling.

The Noble Ones or *ariyās* such as Stream-winners (*sotāpanna*) still are not quite detached; they entertain when (pleasant) feeling arises. But their attachment belongs to the (four types of) consciousness dissociated with wrong view (*ditthigata vippayutta cetasika*). It does not lead to clinging; hence it does not result in

becoming (*bhavo*). Therefore a Stream-winner does not have to undergo the painful process of birth beyond seven existences at the most.

How Pleasant Feeling Causes Ten Kinds of Ill (*dukkha*)

How ten kinds of ill arise, at present, consequent to some pleasurable feeling (*sukha vedanā*) may be stated here.

Pleasurable feeling accompanied by excited-ness (*sukka somanassa vedanā*) arouses craving (*taṇhā*); craving drives one in search for the object of one's fancy (*pariyesana*); and acquire things (*lābha*); on possessing wealth (such as gold, silver and precious objects), and family, etc., one decides (*vinicchaya*) that those are his; having decided them as being one's own, one has passionate attachment (*chanda rāga*) to them; this leads to a tenacious clinging to (*upādāna*) or obsession with them; being very much attached to them one has a keen sense of possession for them (*pariggaha*); possessiveness tends to covetousness (*macchariya*); being covetous, one protects (ā*rakkha*) one's possessions jealously; guarding them jealously, one gets into heated disputes and quarrels that are unwholesome (*akussala*). These unwholesome activities lead to prolonged series of rebirths, mostly in the four unfortunate states of *apāya*, chock-full with *dukkha*.

In this way the present craving becomes the cause of ten kinds of misfortune here and now. Moreover, they lead one to another rebirth. The *dukkha*-prone craving, clinging and *kammic* acts therefore are *dhammas* that need to be discarded. Until one can disown them one wallows in the rounds of *dukkha* as outlined above.

How the Suffering - fraught Resultant (Rebirth) May Be Halted.

Rebirth being resultant can be halted in the following manner:-

Whenever pleasurable feeling arises, be mindful of it and reflect on its impermanent, pain-fraught and impersonal or not-self characteristics. That feeling has arisen due to contact, and does not last any longer than there is contact between sense-base and its relevant object (e.g., eye with object of vision, ear with audible sound, etc.). However much you might wish it to last, it fades out the moment contact is broken. So it is clearly beyond your control a stranger to you, not your self, *anatta*.

Reflecting thus, attachment to that pleasant feeling disappears. As attachment on craving disappears, feeling remains feeling as mere phenomenon, not to be clung

to. As there is no craving for it, there is no clinging to the pleasant feeling. When clinging is absent, no becoming (*bhava*) arises, rebirth (*jāti*) is totally ruled out. (Thus ends *dukkha*).

How Suffering (*Dukkha*) May Be Brought To An End: Another Way

The commentator on *Sutta Nipāta* pinpoints desire or lust as the linchpin of *dukkha*. He says:

"All sorts of woes and suffering are products of passion. When passionate desire is cut off totally; more specifically, when lust for life has been rooted out through the Path-practice, the continued arising of existence or rebirth is no more possible".

Yam kiñci dukkham sambhoti sabbam chanda rāgamūlakā chandarāga nirodhena natthi sukkhassa sambhavo.

On V .737, *Sutta Nipāta*

The substance of this verse is that *dukkha* has its root in passionate desire; when passion dies out (through the Path-Knowledge) rebirth is stopped, thus *nibbāna* without any remnant of existence is attained to or realized.

That is to say: twenty element of extension (*pathavī* such as hair, body hair, etc., twelve elements of cohesion of fluidity (ā*po*) such as bile, phlegm, etc., four elements of heat or cold (*tejo*) such as the burning heat (*santappana tejo*), ageing heat (*jirana tejo*) etc., six elements of motion (*vāyo*) such as the wind element of rising (*uddhangama vāyo*) etc., that constitute the corporeal body of *rūpa*, with its limbs and sense organs such as eye, ear, nose, etc., and that is compounded with mind or mentality comprising the four mental aggregates of feeling, perception, mental formations or driving force, and consciousness, and conjoined as the five aggregates of existence, are the result of one's past *kamma*, committed under the impelling force of passion that craved for existence. Craving through lust was the actual cause of present existence. When the body manifested as present existence is not clung to, but viewed with due circumspection that it is mere compounded phenomena of mind-and-matter that these phenomena are in reality impermanent, painful and not-self, that they are ugly or loathsome (*asubha*) then passionate desire for acquiring a fresh set of aggregates) after death is abandoned.

Such abandonment, however, is just momentary because the *yogi's* mind does not know how to be inclined to *nibbāna*, This being so, it is necessary for the mind to dwell in the peace that is *nibbāna*, the tranquillity of non-arising (*anuppādo*), having discerned truly that arising means *dukkha*, (ū*ppado dukkham*, *anuppādo sukam*). In this way release (*vimokkha*) from the impelling force of passion should

be sought. Unless the mind dwells in *nibbanic* tranquillity of absence of arising, ones momentary loathsome attitude to life does not put one firmly on the Path.

On the crucial point the author of *Visuddhi Magga* says:

"Discerning the danger, the impermanence, the painfulness, the impersonal phenomenon and the vagaries of what has arisen, i.e., the present *khandhā*, aggregates; in other words, seeing the dangers of birth, ageing, sickness and death in all forms of existence; the mind, imbued with the Path- Knowledge, (abandoning the lust for life and cherishing cessation thereof), spring forward to the birthless, non-arising (*anuppāda*) *nibbāna*. In that moment of enlightenment, the mind being bent on the principle of non-arising, realizes *nibbāna*."

Uppāde ādinavam disvā anuppāde cittan pakkhandatīti.

- *Patisambhida Magga*, p. 395.

The gaining of the Path may be stated in plain language thus:

Becoming entails *dukkha*;

Cessation alone is real peace, *nibbāna*.

Cherish cessation, fix the mind there;

There lies the Path-Knowledge,

Complete and sublime.

In this axiom, becoming or arising of existence is *dukkha*; non-becoming or non-arising is *nibbāna*. When the mind is set firmly on the *dhamma* of non-arising the Path-Knowledge in all the four functions or aspects is attained to. How? When the mind opts for non-arising or cessation it amounts to discernment of *dukkha* at the same time severing or uprooting the craving which is its cause. It also, simultaneously, means realization of cessation, and the nurturing or developing this (supra mundane) knowledge which is the Path-knowledge. Accomplishing this fourfold function, one enters the Stream and proceeds to the higher stage of enlightenment.

The Mental Process of Path-Consciousness According to the Commentaries

The detailed mental process involved at the moment of Path-consciousness (reference *uppāde* ā*dinavam disvā anuppādo eittam pakkhandatīti*) is given here:-

The mind is fixed on any one of the three characteristics of the five aggregates impermanence, painfulness or not-self-and by dint of fixity of mind on its object the sublime type of moral consciousness (*mahākusala citta*) flashes in. This consciousness is automatic; it is accompanied by joy and connected with knowledge (ñana *sampayutta*). The series of thought-moments (*vīthi*) that arise are as follows: *parikamma* (preparatory thought-moment that readies the mind for the higher consciousness), *upacāra* (the thought-moment that arises in harmony with the preceding thought-moments and the following *gotrabhu** thought-moment). These (briefly) are the thought-moment that comprise the crucial stages of the mental process, that are termed *javana* # (or *jo* in Myanmar).

It should be remembered in this connection that the mind must not be contemplating on one's aggregates, but on the three characteristics of the aggregates.

Contemplating thus, the aggregates are discerned in their true light (of impermanent, woeful and not-self) so that attachment or craving for them falls off. For example, a *bhikkhu* who is making an alms-bowl is pleased with his handicraft, but on detecting three tiny holes in it he knows it is unserviceable, useless, and so he throws it away. Similarly, however much this body may be apparently attractive, the three characteristics are ever present there. The trained mind, on discovering this truth, gets fed up with it and forsakes its further arising.

The attainment of Path-consciousness by attending to *nibbāna* as mind's object means attending to non-arising, non-rebirth. By 'springing forward' of the mind is meant the determination of one's option for *nibbāna*. This option automatically discards craving once and for all, thus cutting the cause of *dukkha*.

There must be a decided desire for the non-arising or cessation or non-re- birth. Then only craving for existence can be cut off that will ensure the non- recurrence of birth. Path-consciousness means this decisive moment when released from the painful rounds of rebirths is affected and the peace of *nibbāna* is realized.

For a better steadfastness of purpose towards Path-Knowledge the following passage from *Patisambhidā Magga* is quoted again:

Uppādo ādiñavam disivā anuppāde cittam pakkhandatitī:

- Commentary thereon, Vol. II p. 305

That is the enunciation (*uddesa*) (see p. 45 *ante*).

* *Gotrabhu:* lit., 'that which overcomes the sense-sphere lineage or that which develops the sublime or exalted lineage'.

–*Narada Thera:* 'Manual of *Abhidhamma',* Vol, I p. 207 (Yangon 1970)

\# *Javana* (*ju*, to run swiftly);- Here it means 'running', for it runs consecutively for seven thought-moments (normally), hanging on to an identical object. In the supra-mundane *javana* process the Path-conscious- ness arises only for one moment.

Ibid., p. 160

The passage is explained thus:

By 'seeing the dangers of arising' is meant seeing the three characteris-tics of impermanence, etc., that is inherent in all existence that have arisen: *uppādo adīnavam anīccādite ādīnavam disvā*. *Nibbāna* has indeed the four attributes of non-arising (*anuppāda*), non-becoming (*apavatta*), absence of the attributes or marks of existence (*animitta*) and non-exertion (*anāyūhana*):

Anuppādeti ādīhi catūhi nibbānameva vuttam.

"Springing forward of the mind" means the mind being imbued with the Path-Knowledge, being intently inclined to *nibbāna* is its fixed object, rushes out towards *nibbāna*: *cittam pakkhandatīti maggasampayuttāni cittam pakkhan-dhatīti.*

Those are the exposition (*niddesa*) of the above enunciation.

How the Darkness of Ignorance, Craving and Wrong View is Dispelled at the Fleeting Moment of Path-consciousness.

The round of defilements (*kilesa vatta*) is extinguished at the fleeting moment of Path-consciousness. And this is how it happens: The moment Right Understanding throws light on the fact or *dukkha* (inherent in existence) the mistaken or deluded view of *atta* (self) is dispelled. As Path-Knowledge discerns the Truth, the veil of darkness or ignorance is immediately lifted. The moment rebirth is abhorred and its stoppage ardently desired, craving for existence cease. On the cessation of craving one enters the Stream of the Path.

Nibbāna to be the Object of Thought in Practice as Per *Metta Sutta*

Karaniyamattha kusalena yantassantam padam abhisamecca---- (Metta Sutta)

In the above words contained in the *Metta Sutta*, Discourse on Loving-Kindness, the Buddha makes of the practice of attending one's mind to *nibbāna* (*abhisamecca*)*

Thereby gaining the Path-Knowledge. The meaning of the above passage is thus:

"There is such a thing as *nibbāna*,

Tranquil, peaceful through absence of arising and dissolving;

The wise, skilled in his own good,

Should remain inclined to it,

Set his mind well on it."#

* *Abhisamecca*; please see footnote below

\# 'Set his mind well on it.' This is in order to understand and attain to it. That is the rendering of *abhisamecca* in respect of one still in training (*sekkha*).

The Practice of the Path requires a strong desire for cessation of the process of arising and dissolving which implies setting one's heart on the tranquillity of *nibbāna* - as explained in the above line of *Metta Sutta*.

A word of caution:

In the statement, 'Blissful is non-arising' (*anuppādo sukkam*) *anuppado* refers to *nibbāna*; blissful is the attribute of *nibbāna*. The yogi is well advised to set his mind on the non-arising nature of *nibbāna*, not on the blissful nature.

Moreover (similarly), in contemplating the "birth-lessness that is blissful" (*ajati sukkham*), the yogi must attend to the birthlessness of *nibbāna*, and not the bliss. Likewise in "blissful is cessation", (*sukho nirodho*) the yogi must attend to the cessation, and not to the bliss. Cessation, non-arising, birth-lessness, unconditioned--all those words are epithets of *nibbāna*. These being the same in their essence, a yogi may choose any one of them as his object of consciousness for the same purpose.

The Noble Practice or *Brahmacariya* Defined

To end the round of *dukkha*, the practice of the Path is essential. The Buddha was wont to say, "Come, *bhikkhu*, for the sake of terminating *dukkha*, practice well the noble Practice of the Path".

(*Ehi bhikkhu cara brahmacariyam sammā dukkhassa antākiriyāya*.)

I shall expand this:

The practice of the Path means conducting oneself with an ardent desire to end *dukkha* through attainment of non-arising. Non-arising or *nibbāna* without a trace of sentient existence (*anupādisesa*) or any remnant of being, is achieved by a cessation of ignorance, craving and wrong view that usher in repeated round of births. It means eliminating the round (recurrence) of defilements. Eliminating defilements calls for correct understanding of the five aggregates that means striving to see their characteristics of impermanence, suffering and not-self, which also amounts to seeing the inherent dangers of ageing, illness and death that birth entails. Once the five aggregates are seen in their true nature as impermanent and fraught with danger, knowledge dawns on you and ignorance recedes. Craving for existence fades out. Wrong view (about self) is discarded. With the cessation of ignorance, craving and wrong view, the recurrent defilements that cause rebirth, the fresh round of births is cut off at source. For, there is no more *kammic* force to sustain rebirth. This sort of cessation is the right practice according to the path: it is the right attention that achieves the Stream of the Path-Knowledge. It is the way to end *dukkha*.

***Nibbāna* Actually Exists- *vide Udana*.**

For further establishing the truth the actuality of *nibbāna* may be stated with reference to *Udāna* (*Khuddaka Nikāya*).

(Q). How can we know that *nibbāna* exists?

(A). "*Bhikkhus*, there exists the uncaused, (of feeling, *vedanā*, caused by contact, *phassa*, etc.), un-originated, unmade, unconditioned"--- (where the arising-developing-vanishing process of births and deaths is unknown)- that is *nibbāna*." (Hence *nibbāna* is a reality: it is a word that stands for something that actually is.)

(Atthi bhikkhave ajātam abhūtam akatam asankhatam nibbānanti).

-*Udana*, p. 178.

Netthi Atthakathā explains the above texts in these terms:

“Since it is in the nature of not arising, it (*nibbāna*)

is called birthless. Being unborn thus,

it indeed means un-originated.”

(anibbatti sabhāvattā ajātam tato eva abhūtam).

-*Netthi Aṭṭhakatha*, P. 120

Nibbāna, therefore, is the autithesis of becoming.

It helps to understand *nibbāna* in any one of these (negative) descriptions attributes: that *nibbāna* is the *dhamma* that is completely devoid of the aggregates (*khandha*) which therefore is birth less (*ajāta*), un-originated (abhūta), un-made (*akata*), unconditioned (*asankhata*) un-arisen (*anuppāda*), non-becoming (*apavatta*), sign less (*animitta*). In attending to *nibbāna* as the object of consciousness, any one of these seven attributes can be employed that suits the *yogi*.

Realizing *Nibbāna* --- Its Meaning

To realize *nibbāna* means attaining to *Arahatta Phala* the Final Fruition of the Path-Knowledge wherein Craving is uprooted. *Nibbāna* therefore means the final extinction of existence when the last existence of an *arahat* ceases to be, without any *remnants* of being--- i.e., without any possibility of the five aggregates rising again. (*anupādisesa nibbāna*).

Nibbāna also means the breaking of Death’s bond (*samuccheda marana*) once the present existence has passed away. This is another way of describing cessation without further arising.

To attain *nibbāna* means to terminate the round of rebirths which is nothing but suffering. Hence it is the end of fresh becoming after the present existence, a cessation of birth.

That indeed is so. Even the Buddha, after having won assurance (from the mouth of *Dipankarā* Buddha), to become a Buddha, had to travel the tedious journey of *samsarā*, and he accomplished that birthless ness only when he had laid down the burden of his last existence as *Siddattha Gotama*. Only then did he come to the end of *dukkha*.

Hetū nirodhā phalanirodho: when cause cases result (fruit) is no more. When the path-practice has brought about the cessation of ignorance, craving and volitional acts or *kamma* that cause birth, no fresh birth after the present existence is forthcoming, so that the round of becoming that is *dukkha*, is put to a stop. And herein lies the essence of *nibbāna*, its reality.

In other words, on realizing *nibbāna*, the roots of rebirth, namely, ignorance, craving and *kammic*, deeds are totally cut off or uprooted, so that fresh becoming is impossible. This cessation of fresh becoming is the essence of *nibbāna*. This is how *nibbāna* actually exists.

Contemplating the Four Noble Truths in Plain (Myanmar) Terms

The following rendering of the teaching contained in the text and the commentary should be contemplated well:-

Whatever comes to exist

Must pass away,

And hence is unsatisfactory, *dukkha*.

Only when existence ceases

Does *dukkha* ceases.

Only with the cessation of *dukkha*.

There is peace, the bliss of *nibbāna*.

All acts done with lust for life

Merely cause *dukkha.*

When existence is abhorred

And its cessation sought,

Then non-craving, non-attachment,

Puts one on the Path.

This is understanding rightly,

The Knowledge

Of the Four Noble Truths.

(The significance of these lines is already familiar to the reader).

Another Method in Plain (Myanmar) Terms

“The becoming of the aggregates;

Being subject to ageing and death,

Is painful, unsatisfactory.

Only when birth ceases,

This painful process is ended.

Then only is it peaceful, satisfactory.”

Contemplating thus,

The ignorance

In not understanding birth as *dukkha*

Falls away;

The ignorance

In not understanding cessation of birth

As bliss (*nibbāna*)

Is dispelled.

With ignorance dispelled,

Gone is craving,

Gone is clinging,

And stopped is the process of becoming.

Hence the path is gained

For the Stream - entrant.

(Q). Why does craving bring rebirth and consequent *dukkha*?

(A). Because craving is always coupled with ignorance so that the true nature of the five aggregates--- materiality, feeling, perception, mental formations, consciousness--- is not perceived. This being so, one takes the wrong view that this compounded thing of the five aggregates is one's self, that it is lasting, that it is pleasant, and that it is within one's own control. This wrong view fans the fire of attachment. Thus stooped in defilements, one is driven to commit volitional actions and build up stores of *kamma*. This *kammic* potential causes rebirth to occur without fail.

In this manner craving with respect to the past, the future and the present causes defilements to arise incessantly. The result (of past *kamma*) is the present *dukkha* beginning with birth. The process of cause (craving) and resultant (rebirth) is the inexorable process, independent of person or self. In so far as craving plays its dominant part in all our activities at present it will certainly cause rebirth with its train of woes. The fact of suffering and the cause the roof must be perceived through serious contemplation. With sufficient mindfulness the yogi will come to realize the falsehood of his age, that in truth there is no such thing as a being or a self or a person apart from the five aggregates arising and falling from cause. And the moment that right understanding occurs, the wrong view of self and doubts about the veracity of the Law, *Dhamma*, ceases once and for all. The *yogi* has become a Stream-winner.

From Cause arises Result; When Cause cease Result ceases.

Having shown craving as the origin of *dukkha* I shall now dwell on the cessation of *dukkha* (rebirth) through practice of the Path-Knowledge.

When one persistently contemplates the aggregates of materiality, feeling, perception, mental formations and consciousness as being totally devoid of any lasting quality, pleasurableness or control; as being unable to keep fit, sound and youthful forever; as being not-person, not-being, as being a lifeless and soul-less, compound of mind-and-matter, subject to impermanence, suffering and not-self; one becomes disenchanted with them. Nay, one discerns the danger lurking in them. Being thus disenchanted and wisely cautioned, one desires to be rid of them. One stops craving. One stops committing *kamma*. The round of defilements having thus ceased, the round of resultants by way of rebirth ceases, and *nibbāna* comes in sight.

When the path practice has destroyed ignorance, craving and the round of *kammic* action that produce the round of fresh becoming, rebirth is brought to a stop just as when the flame cannot arise when the wick and fuel are used up. Here, one should be clear about the ultimate truth that what ceases is the process of rebirth, and its attendant *dukkha*, and that it is not a person gone extinct Only phenomena cease; this is brought about by the Knowledge that comes of the practice of the path. When one clearly discerns thus one is free from doubt: one attains the path as Stream-enterer.

Put in another way:

"Through craving for existence, rebirth and all suffering arise. When that craving extinguished, rebirth and all the consequent *dukkha* have their source cut off. Remember the analogy of the flame: When the fuel and the wick are no more the flame must die out. That is the simile employed by the All-Knowing One".

Contemplating for the Cessation of Craving for Existence

Another way of contemplating for the cessation of craving for existence:

To exhaust craving for existence, one should contemplate on the dangers that surround birth which that craving has brought about. Ponder well the full significance of ageing, illness and death that follow birth as of necessity. By persistent and vigilant mindfulness this fact of *dukkha* that the present existence carries will dawn on you. You will be displeased with your existence: you will not crave for a future existence any more. And you do not get what you do not crave for. For example, how could a tree spring up when the necessary conditions or factors of soil, moisture (water) and healthy seed-germ do not come together?

The essence is this:

Resultant occurs due to (appropriate) cause. Where the cause ceases to be, no resultant arises, Rebirth is caused by craving which is its origin. When craving for existence ceases, no rebirth is possible. A clear understanding of these four noble truths frees one from doubt that results in Path-Knowledge.

Note carefully that:

(1).Unless one perceives that *dukkha* is cause by craving which is its origin one never is certain about the existence of *nibbāna*.

(2). When craving is seen as the source of all *dukkha*, the termination of *dukkha* (by not allowing rebirth to occur) through extinction of craving is discernible. Thus the peace that lies in birthless-ness is perceived without a shred of doubt.

(3). If one is actually free from craving, one can be satisfied with the fact of attaining *nibbāna*. In that case, there can be no doubt as to the reality (actuality) of *nibbāna*. Please take note of how one's doubts come to be allayed (through the Path-Knowledge).

Towards Attaining 'Stream-entry' here and now

Real refuge or firm status or Relief can be aspired to by anyone under the Buddha's Teaching (*sāsanā*) here and now. How this aspiration may be realized is shown below:-

One should strive with diligence contemplating thus: these five aggregates are conditioned by cause. If the cause is made to die out they cannot arise again. Remember, it is not any being or individual that goes to extinction: it is only the five aggregates that have arisen from cause (i.e., ignorance couple with craving) that are put to rest through non-continuance of the cause. Thus the cause-resultant process and the phenomenon of the aggregates should be reflected on with mindfulness, without entertaining doubts. For this means dispelling of doubt about the Four Truths. If no shred of doubt remains, one is freed from the (usual) uncertainty based on all sorts of wrong views ranging from *sasasta* view and *uccheda* view, numbering up to sixty-two kinds. Being freed from doubt, one 'enters the stream of the Path-Knowledge'.

As the Commentary puts its:

"Dependent on craving, i.e., craving for sensuality, craving for existence and craving for non-existence, there arise all forms of *dukkha* such as birth, etc. With the destruction of that cause through the Path-Knowledge headed by Right Understanding (i.e., through contemplating the impermanence, painfulness and soulless-ness (not-self) character of all conditioned things) birth and all these *dukkha* cease."

(Hetum paticca sambhutā hetubanghā nirujjhere).

-Commentary on *Samyutta*, *Sagatha Vagga*.

The cessation of rebirth means realization of *nibbāna*.

It is important to note that merely wishing for cessation of rebirth is to no avail unless one understands that rebirth is caused by craving. The Path- Knowledge is

attained to only on understanding the root-cause of rebirth which is the essential Truth to be discerned here. Hence there must be both an ardent wish for cessation and a full understanding of the underlying cause for the gaining of Path-Knowledge.

Note simply thus: (Myanmar verse)

Birth arises from cause that is craving.

Craving must be rejected as of necessity.

Seeing this necessity and desiring for cessation of rebirth,

One does indeed reject craving,

In *Vinaya* the Buddha has said:

"*Vimuttasmim vimuttamhiti ñanam hoti*:"

"On gaining release from the clutches of one's defilements, knowledge of such release arise". This is the reviewing knowledge, *paccavakkhanā* ñā*na*, that usually arises when the Path-Knowledge has been gained. In other words, an *ariya* is able to ascertain for himself how much purity he has achieved.

-*Mahāvagga*, p. 20ff

Comprehending the Four Noble Truths in Plain (Myanmar) Terms

"Because one craves for being,

Rebirth and all *dukkha* arise.

Abandon the craving,

And there ends *dukkha*."

Craving for being or existence is the origin, *samudaya*, of rebirth, the Noble Truth of *Dukkha*. Abandoning that craving through the practice of the Eightfold Noble Path, headed by Right-Understanding is the Truth of the Way. The extinction of rebirth is the Truth of Cessation of *dukkha*; it is *nibbāna*. When the *yogi* clearly comprehends that the process of mind-matter composition has been stilled --- and that what ceases is no person or being --- then his consciousness is freed from doubts about the Truth. He becomes a Stream-enterer. The attaining of this Path-Knowledge and Fruition means assurance against falling into the four miserable states of *apāya* with the ultimate liberation from *samsara's* dreary and dangerous rounds. Such a Noble One is said to be one who has found refuge, who has gained a foothold, who has won relief under the Buddha's Teaching or *sāsanā*.

(The above is a resume of how the law of causality is to be comprehended as regards the Four Truths).

Telling the Beads Towards Uprooting Craving for Existence

Patisambhidiā Magga gives the following pithy sentences to be contemplated on for insight, either by way of meditation or by telling the beads:-

Jāti dukkham ajāti sukham:

"Rebirth (being subject to ageing, illness and death), is *dukkha*. Birthless-ness or cessation of rebirth (being not subject to decay and death) is blissful (*sukha).*"

The essence is: whatever comes into being must pass away. Where no becoming arises there is nothing whatever to go to decay or perish. That is why any form of existence is *dukkha*, and extinction of existence is blissful, *nibbāna*.

Whether one meditates on the above truth or tells beads in contemplation there of, the impermanence of all conditioned things, their painfulness, and their impersonal (not-self) character are perceived and one becomes progressively aware of the dangers and ills of existence. One becomes desirous of cessation of existence. This desire is nothing but the inclination to *nibbāna*. For this desire virtually amounts to forsaking craving for existence. It means finding the way out from the snare of craving: it means *nibbāna*.

In other words, if you wish to have an end of rebirth, the consequences of rebirth (i.e., ageing, disease and death and other related suffering) must be pondered on deeply. Persistently pondering thus, disgust with existence creeps in and craving for future existence dies out. When the craving cease, how could rebirth occur? "The root cause having been destroyed no resultant can ever arise". This is infallible essence of the teaching.

The argument here is this: Practicing the *dhammma* means in essence striving to eradicate craving. To root out craving, one must have a strong distaste for rebirth as a veritable, woeful process. So the *yogi* needs to contemplate on the woefulness that rebirth brings. After habituated dwelling on the ill of rebirth and its inevitable consequences one feels a righteous disgust for all forms of existence, either here or hereafter. When the craving for existence dies a natural death, that defilement just becomes expelled from your mental makeup. And the fact of this expulsion lands one straight onto the Path-Knowledge.

"The becoming of the aggregates,

Is painful, unsatisfactory.

Only when birth ceases,

Can there be real Peace."

Contemplating hard on the above lines can lead to the same attainment.

(Here ends the discussions on how direct or penetrative Knowledge may be gained, having advanced from acquired knowledge that conforms to the Teaching.)

Contemplating For Convergence of *Nibbāna* as

Mental Object and Path-Consciousness.

To achieve a convergences or unity between *Nibbāna* as mental object and Path-consciousness that has *nibbāna* as its object is no easy matter. However, the following method should prove of great help.

This method is the procedure to transcend mundane knowledge and attain to the supra-mundane knowledge of the Path. Right Understanding, of course, prevails at both the level of knowledge.

"Becoming entails *dukkha*;

Cessation alone is real Peace, *nibbāna*,

Cherish cessation, fix the mind there;

There lies the Path-Knowledge

Complete and sublime:"

In contemplating the *dukkha* that birth or becoming entails, fix your mind on any one of the three characteristics of the five aggregates (i.e., impermanent, suffering or not-self). In so doing, the consciousness will gain fixity on the thought-object, advancing from the preparatory stage (*parikamma*) to a fair steadiness in concentration close to the higher consciousness approaching the supra-mundane (*upacāra*), and thence to *anuloma*, the thought-moment that harmonizes the concentration of *upacāra* to the transformation thought-process of *gotrabhu**. At the last mentioned stage the mind is fixed on the cessation of phenomena (mind-and-matter). It is now in a pure and pliable state to overcome the conditioned, sense-sphere object external to it. The Path-Knowledge remains still to be attained. It is only when the mind decides to adopt cessation as its unequivocal goal that the Path-

Knowledge flashes in on the extraordinarily perceptive consciousness. Hence the importance of 'cherishing the cessation'.

The underlying meaning to note is *Nibbāna* as cessation is the thought-object; the Path-consciousness that relishes *Nibbāna* is the consciousness that fixes its attention on *Nibbāna*. When that consciousness, through fixity of attention, converges with its object, the Path-Knowledge in realized. At that fleeting moment the mind gains penetrative knowledge of the truth of *dukkha*, the utter rejection of *dukkha's* maker, craving, the tranquil abiding in the cessation of craving and the development of the Peace that comes of the cessation, thus accomplishing the fourfold aspect of the Truth simultaneously.

. Thus *Nibbāna* is the only exit from (the snare of) craving: it is the only object of thought for that escape, where there is a total absence of becoming, cessation, pacification, birthless, non-occurring, non-arising, unconditioned. Put in another way, *Nibbāna* is the total abandonment of lust for living. Or, in other words, it is the decisive thought-moment when one makes the final resolve to forsake any form of existence, however glorified or seemingly lasting#. This decisive consciousness is knowledge of the Path which fully understands that there is no happiness, on peace, greater than the noble, secure and blissful reality of *nibbāna*, where no becoming occurs, where becoming is totally absent, and which is birthlessness, non-occurrence, non arising, unconditioned. It is an irrevocable departure from craving. It is the most momentous resolution, made through the power of right concentration that gives up all forms of existence.

* *Gotrabhu*: Please see footnote at p.46 ante

'Seemingly lasting': Refers to certain Brahma life spans that may last as long as 84,000 *mahā kappas in nega sannā nā sannāyatana* Realm, the highest of the formless spores (*arūpa bhūmi*) – Translator.

Realization of *Nibbāna* is indeed the cessation or eradication of craving

that is the cause of the existence of the five aggregates. Hence:-

"All suffering surrounds you

Just because you willed for them—

You wished for this or that form of existence.

Cut off that craving: Now!

Unless you do that

You're bound to go on existing

Perilously existing,*

On and on and on …"

Vāna nikkhamtā is the word that expresses the fact which means 'departure from craving'. Through detachment from the five aggregates, one leaves the realm of *dukkha* and enters the safety of *nibbāna*. Realizing that *nibbāna* is non-craving, one roots out craving, leaving no attachment to the world. That noble moment of irrevocable resolve is the thought-moment when *nibbāna* is realized.

Please note very carefully that what ceases - as when what has arisen - is merely the five aggregates in truth and reality. For if a soul or a being is conceived in this matter, one would either be just clinging either to the eternalist view (*sassata vāda*) or to the nihilist view (*uccheda vāda*). Remember, the Buddha speaks of "the uprising or appearance of the aggregates" (*Khandānam pātubhavo*) and "the breaking up of the aggregates" (*Khandhānam bhedo*). (Please see *Vibhanga*, p.144).

Comprehending the Four Noble Truths Through Their Essential Features

A complete understanding of the Four Noble Truths may be summarized in the following manner:

(Q). Do you see the Truth of *Dukkha* entirely?

(A). Yes. How? In the sense that 'Conditioned are all arising': that 'Woeful are all arising'. (*uppādo sankhāra*, *uppādo dukkham*. Ref. *Patisambhidā Magga*, p. 57).

(Q). Do you understand the Truth of Cessation or *Nibbāna* in its full significance?

(A). Yes.

(Q). With reference to which Pali?

(A). With reference (again) to *Patisambhidā Magga*. *Anuppado nibbanam* “Non-arising means bliss, *nibbāna*”. Or put otherwise: *Anuppādo sukham*

* ‘Perilously existing’: for all forms of existence are bound up with ageing and death and untold hazards.

“Pacified (*nibbāna*) is non-arising”.

Herein, non-arising is peaceful (*sukka*) because since nothing whatever arises, nothing is there to go to decay and to got destroyed. Hence it is called bliss *nibbāna*. One who realizes this truth is one who sees the Truth of Cessation in its entirety.

(Q). Do you comprehend the Truth of the Origin of *dukkha* in its full significance?

(A). Yes.

(Q). How?

(A). In so far as one is not entirely free from the mental state of greed (*lobha*) which is consciousness disconnected with wrong view (*ditthigata-vippayutta*),one still craves, and is therefore not dissolved from its consequent ill(*dukkha*).

(Q). Do you understand fully the Truth of the Noble way?

(A). Yes.

(Q). How?

(A). Where one has uprooted craving (like a palm tree rooted out entirely, and hence never can rise again*) the Path-Knowledge is culminated. He is an *arahat* who has uprooted craving.

On who has full conviction in the above Fourfold Truth can gain the Path.

Why is pleasant feeling called suffering (*dukkha*)?

To this (apparent contradiction) the Commentator, author of *Sammohavinodanī Atthakathā* has this in reply: “Although the feeling as such may be pleasant or pleasing, it is called suffering (*dukkha*) in the ultimate sense because that feeling does not last as one would have wished; it is fraught with trouble in getting it or keeping it; it is uncontrollable, untenable. In sum, is changeable and corruptive”. (See p.80 of the said Commentary).

To impress the truth that the becoming and dissolution pertains only to the five aggregates (which in truth and reality is *dukkha*), and not to any person or being, the Commentator says:

"Indeed, it is only the fact of *dukkha* that arises or comes into being. It is *dukkha* such as ageing and disease that stay there (however momentarily) and then decay and die out. Another set of *dukkha* (manifested as the aggregates) then appears only to dissolve in its turn. It is just like the current of the river, this flux of arising and dissolutions of the aggregates and the undercurrents of *dukkha* go on uninterruptedly".

> *Dukkhameva hi sambhoti dukkham titthati veti ca Naññam dukkham nirujjhati naññam dukkham upajjati, Avīci anusambandho nadīsotova vattati.* – *VisuddhiMagga,* Vol.II P.228, commenting on *Samyutta Nikāya, I P.137.*

* 'Like a palm tree'; The Buddha uses this simile in a number of his discourses, e.g., in *Chandarāga Sutta*, (*Rādha Samyutta*,) *Khandha Vagga*, *Samyutta Nikāya*.).

What the above commentary explains is that the process of arising-developing-dissolution of phenomena – their birth, ageing and death in turn – have been taking place from beginningless samsara. When one sees things in truth and reality that it is not the birth, ageing and death of someone or some person, but the complex of ill (*dukkha*) constituted of mind-and-matter that take their own cause of happenings, one is freed from wrong view and doubts.

In comprehending the Truth in its ultimate sense, there is no person or being that truly exists: only the Truth of Suffering exists; the Truth of the origin of suffering (i.e., craving) exists; the Truth of the cessation of suffering exist; the Truth of the Way leading to that cessation exists.

Why does one make efforts in the practice of the *Dhamma*.

Now I will dwell on how and why one has to put effort in the practice of the *Dhamma*.

The main reason for a yogi in practicing the *Dhamma* is to gain release from suffering, *dukkha*. He needs, therefore, to contemplate that all existence is *dukkha*; that when no birth happens again *dukkha* is ended. When rebirth ceases, no fresh round of *dukkha* occurs and this is the bliss of *nibbāna*.

That being so, the aim of *Dhamma*-practice is striving for cessation of rebirth. To achieve that objective, one must discard craving for existence. And to be able to

attain to that sort of real detachment, one has to contemplate hard on the dangers, hazards and ills such as the liability to fall into the four miserable states of *apāya*, and the usual chain of woes, namely, rebirth, ageing, disease and death that craving for existence brings, As a result of habituated contemplation, one being able to discern the dangers that surround rebirth, etc. One gets disgusted with the present existence; one dreads at the prospect of another round of suffering coming along with a fresh form of existence. Craving for existence ceases accordingly. Let us take a simile. A certain man has taken a demon as wife who presented herself in the false guise of a celestial beauty. Not soon after, he noticed that his beloved wife would be missing at night while he was asleep. One night he kept track of her movements and to his consternation saw her at the burial ground eating human corpses. Then he knew what he had taken for a celestial beauty was in fact a demon. He dreaded to see her again and fled to safety. Much in the same way, when the *yogi*, by dint of constant mindfulness, sees clearly the truth of suffering through impermanence, ill and not-self in the five aggregates of his present existence he would abandon craving instantly. His mind would then be readily orientated toward cessation. This of course is the Path-consciousness. For the mind then rushes forward to the haven of *nibbāna* where alone the perils of rebirth are totally absent. This is how craving for existence must be rooted out if rebirth is to be effectively stopped. As the text says: *Hetu nirodhā phala nirodho* – "Where the cause ceases no resultant occurs". Rebirth, the resultant, can only be stopped through total abandoning of its cause, craving.

Complete safety from the world's woes is attainable only when there is no rebirth. Cessation of craving and the resulting cessation of rebirth-is *nibbāna*. Realization of *nibbāna* means just this. And this is the main object of the yogi (who is also called *bhikkhu* in the wide sense of the word, for he is a *bhikkhu* who strives for escape from *samsara's* woes). (Translator's note)

Two types of views arise (for a worldling) regarding the body, namely: the first view takes that the five aggregates, the sense-bases and the elements that this body represents are lasting, pleasurable and one's own self. This view, of course, is based on craving coupled with delusion or wrong view. As such it is the misguided view. The second view, on the other hand, with intelligent attention, takes those objects of thought as being devoid of any real life, impermanent, painful and impersonal or non-self. The former is the cause or origin of all trouble, *dukkha*; hence it should be discarded.

The latter view is for the practice of the Path because it is the right understanding to discern trouble or suffering in all the compounded things such as the aggregates. The mind, in taking them up as objects of thought is guided by that discernment. Such proper attitude to mere phenomena that are impermanent, unsatisfactory (*dukkha*) and impersonal, uncontrollable, lets one maintain detachment from them, thereby leading to release from the round of rebirths. Such practice is worth while and should be kept up and developed.

The former misguided attitude is to be discarded (*pahātabba*) while the latter, the proper attitude, is to be nurtured (*bhāvetabba*).

Discarding the improper attitude and nurturing the right attitude lets one see things in their true state (*yathābūta*). This has been pointed out by the Buddha in *Anattalakkhama Sutta* as follows:-

It is not fitting that this body of mind-matter compound should be seen or regarded as, "This is mine, this am I, this is my 'self'" (in other words, that this body is my own person, at my disposal or under my control, a being having a life).

The Buddha further taught the right attitude thus:-

This body of mind-matter compound should, as it really is and by right wisdom, be seen or regarded as, "This is not mine, this I am not, and this is not my 'self'". (that this is not my own person, not at my disposal, not under my control, no being, not having any real life.)

If one contemplates righteously that the five aggregates are "not mine, not me, not my person" the three expansionist attitudes*of craving, vanity and wrong view that hinder spiritual progress are destroyed. This is so because the

* 'Expansionist attitudes': *papañca dhammas*: the three mental attitudes that tend to see things in erroneously extended view based on 'I- consciousness', e.g., my wife, my house, etc.

three evil attitudes occur in the eight classes of consciousness rooted in greed or attachment (*lobha*) so that when greed is eliminated from one's mental makeup, these three evil dispositions cannot arise. In such case (where greed is absent) the root of *dukkha* has been taken out entirely; the result is that the cankers or outflows of passion (*āsava*) that taint the mind are completely purged. In the discourse referred to above (*Anattalakkhana Sutta*), the group of five *bhikkhus* attained arahatship through uprooting the three evil dispositions.

The Buddha's Conclusion

The Buddha concludes the above discourse in these words:

> "Having seen thus, *Bhikkhus*, the well-taught Noble Disciple is disgusted with the five aggregates. Being displeased with them, he is disenchanted with them. Thus being dispassionate, he is freed from them. When thus freed, he knows by his reviewing knowledge, gained as a result of the Path-consciousness, that it is freedom."

(Evam passam bhikkhave sutavā ariya sāvako sankhāresu nibbindati nibbiddam virajjati virāgā vimuaccati vimuttasmim vimuttamhīti ñānam hoti).

-Mahāvagga, Vinaya Pitaka

The reviewing knowledge or *pacca vekkhanā ñāna* of an *ariya* that knows himself as a freed Noble Disciple (that it is freedom) referred to above takes place like this: whereas previously he had not understood that 'all arising are woeful' (*uppādo dukkham*), he now understands it. Whereas previously he did not recognize the need to understand that, he now recognizes it.

Whereas previously he had not known craving as the cause of troubles' *dukkha*, he now knows it. Whereas he did not see that craving is needed to be uprooted, he now sees it. And he has uprooted craving accordingly.

Whereas previously he had not, as *Patisambhidā Magga* has put it, '*annuppādo sukham'*, understood that non-arising is true Peace or *nibbāna*, he now understands it. Whereas he did not see the need to experience the peace of cessation, he now sees it. And he has realized that peace (*nibbāna*) through insight.

Whereas previously he had not known the true way of the Path, he has now known it. Whereas he had not understood that the Path-consciousness needed to be cultivated or nurtured, he now understands it. And he has cultivated or developed it. Having thus cultivated, he has attained the Path-Knowledge and knows by himself of the fact of his attainment. In this way there remains in him no doubt about the Truth.

A word of caution: by mental culture along the right lines, a weariness of all conditioned things such as the five aggregates may come to the *yogi:* but unless he can orientate his mind to the Peace or *nibbāna* (that is the quelling of the passions) he cannot attain to the Path-Knowledge. Hence, he should not merely get wearied of existence, but further attend his mind to the passionless state. In so attending, the mind becomes disenchanted with the aggregates. The Path-consciousness then gets fully orientated to *nibbanic* bliss which is cessation of the passions. When the mind is sufficiently immersed in that bliss and really relishes it, the Path-Knowledge flashes in. For then craving for existence has left him entirely.

The significance of the above statement is this: Having to exist with the presence of the five *khandhās* means, in truth and reality, troublesome, *dukkha*. The cessation of existence, without possibility of a fresh set of the aggregates, means Peace, *nibbāna*. Therefore when the mind relishes cessation, wherein lies the essence of *nibbāna*, the eradication of craving for existence is accompli- shed.

Through contemplating thus in the right understanding, the expansionist, hindering attitudes of craving, vanity and wrong view die out. When these hindering *dhammas* do not obstruct the vision of one's mental faculty, the Path can be gained, culminating in *arahatta phala* or the final Fruition.

(End of contemplating *dukkha* in the wrong and right ways).

Impersonality or Not-self (*anatta*) must be perceived in the first place.

Of the three characteristics of impermanence, ill and not-self, the last one is vitally important to understand. Having understood it, the other two fall into line automatically. For instance, if not-self is not seen in one's perception, what-ever impermanence is there is apt to be viewed as 'I am permanent', and whatever suffering is felt, 'I suffer', and so on. When, on the other hand, anatta is perceived well, whatever is changing is seen, in truth and reality, as the phenomena of the five aggregates changing. Suffering arises in the five aggregates only: there is no one who actually suffers. This perception means the knowledge of the Path which has dispelled the deluded view of self or 'I-consciousness' or Personality-belief (*sakkāya ditthi*). On attaining this understanding one is freed from wrong view and doubts as to the Truth. This is winning 'Stream-entry' or becoming a *sotapanna.*

(Here ends methods of contemplating as per *Anattalakkhana Sutta*).

The significance of not-self (*anatta*) is clarified by the commentator, of *VisuddhiMagga*, as follows:

"It is not-self because it is of no substance or essence (*sāro*). It means, there is no real master occupying the five aggregates that directs the affairs, big or small, of the compound thing of those aggregates. There is none who suffers anything good or bad there. There is none who is in command or at the controls. Hence, any conception about there being a permanent or pleasing self therein is vain. Such a conceptualization or notion is not in the true nature of things. Indeed this is so. The five aggregates are impermanent as evident in their ageing, illness and death. Being impermanent, they are painful. That imperman- ence, that changeability, cannot be willed against by one for oneself. Hence how could there be that there is any person

in the five aggregates who either acts or does things, or who suffers? Thus it should be discerned”.

(Anattā asārakatthenati sāmīnivāsī kārako vedako sayamvasīti evam parikappitassa atthasārassa abhāvena. Yañhi aniccam tam dukkham attanopi aniccatam vā vipariṇāmadhammatam vā nivāretum na sakkoti kuto tassa kārakādibhāvo atthiti.)

(*VisuddhiMagga*, Vol. II, p. 245 (See also *Patisambhidā Atthakathā*)

Questions and Answers bringing out the Not-self Character

(Q). Is there any one or being who creates or causes pain or pleasure?

(A). No. It is due to *phassa*, contact alone that pain or pleasure arises. If contact ceases feeling (*vedanā*) ceases. Feeling can not be made to last by any one or any being. No one has any control over feeling.

(Q). Is not the present five aggregates a being, a person, a self with a life?

(A). No. The reason is that these five aggregates are not amenable to anyone. None is there to prevent the five aggregates from ageing, illness or death.

That there is no self in the five aggregates is evident from the fact that there is no control over them to prevent their changeable character, such as ageing, illness, etc., as regards the materiality therein. Nor is there any control over the mentality, so that no feeling, however pleasant, cannot be made to last. However much one might wish against ageing, illness and death, such wish is never fulfilled, for there is no power, no force, non phenomenon that can make any conditioned thing last, or obey one’s wishes. Seeing this, one should cast away the wrong, deluded view of Personality or self (*sakkāya-ditthi*). For even though there are signs of existence, the aggregates are really devoid of permanency, pleasure or personality; they are soulless, empty, vain. In other words, this mind-matter complex is no one’s self, no none’s personality, not-self at all.

The aggregates apparently appear as living, for the so-called person moves about and acts and speaks. To the uncultivated mind this apparent living being is highly convincing as a personality. In truth and reality, all the movement, actions and speech that one is able to perform are none of one’s own capability. The essential

conditions of *kamma* or *kammic* force (of the previous existence), citta consciousness, temperature and nutriment must be in proper shape so as to enable a living thing function normally. Lacking knowledge about this fundamental fact of the ultimate truth, most people are led into thinking that there is personality or individuality in the five aggregates. However, the not-self character is evident from the facts of inability to make a pleasant feeling last, or to ward off ageing, illness and death. Anyone who thinks he is master of the aggregates that he holds as his own, is just like the cow-herd employed by a ranch owner. Although the cow-herd tends his cattle as though it were his own, he actually does not own any one cow in the herd. So also, the deluded worldling looks after the five aggregates fondly as though they were his own, but he does not actually own them. Nor are the aggregates at his disposal any more than the herd is at the disposal of the cow-herd.

One who distinguishes the ultimate meanings of *dukkha* (pain) and *sukha* (peace) is one who sees *nibbāna* (*ditthapatta puggala*), as stated in *VisuddhiMagga*:-

"Where one comes to understand that all conditioned things are troublesome or painful, and that their total cessation is blissful; one who can discriminate between (*viditam*) pain and peace rightly, who discerns this truth, who realizes it, whose consciousness conjoins with (*phusitam*) the peace of such cessation, is one who knows with the Path-Knowledge. Such an astute one (*tekkha puggala*) is called one who has direct knowledge of *nibbāna*, a *ditthapatta puggala*.

> *(Dukkhā sankhārā sukho nirodhoti ñatam hoti dittham viditam sacchi-katam phusitam paññayāti dittha-pattoti vuccati).*

- *VisuddhiMagga*, Vol. II, p. 298.

See also *PatisambhidāMagga*, p. 248

Mental Culture per *PatisambhidāMagga* for a speedy

realization of *Nibbāna*.

Uppādo sankhārā amuppādo nibbānam.

Arising is mere conditioned existence, subject to changeability (arising-developing-dissolution) (or), conditioned by *kamma*, consciousness, temperature and nutriment, hence troublesome, unsatisfactory, verily *dukkha*. Non - arising or cessation of rebirth is *nibbāna*, the unconditioned, the birth less bliss."

When one meditates on the above truths the evil that lies in the necessity of decay in whatever has sprung from cause, will be perceived. Then the mind will be inclined to the *dhamma* of non-arising or the unconditioned. In such case the mind will cherish the unconditioned bliss that is *nibbāna* which also has the simultaneous effect of eradicating craving for existence. Once craving is rooted out, the Path-Knowledge is gained; the Four functions of the Path are accomplished at the same instant.

The accomplishment of the four functions pertaining to the Path is explained thus:-

When the mind is pleased with cessation of birth it naturally abhors birth and the mind-matter complex that *jāti* has brought about. It recognizes the five aggregates as *dukkha*. W hen abhorrence of birth takes place the eradication of craving for existence is accomplished. For then all forms of existence are rejected as unsatisfactory.

Once craving for existence is extinguished the birthlessness or cessation or *nibbāna* is realized. For where craving is totally absent rebirth does not arise. Then the abandonment of craving for existence is tantamount to the development of the Path-practice. The consciousness of such abandonment is nothing but Path-consciousness.

From the point of view of the Four Noble Truths, all mind-and-matter rising from cause is *dukkha* in reality (*dukkha saccā*). Non-arising or cessation of rebirth is *nibbāna* (*nirodha saccā*). Meditating on the unconditioned character of *nibbāna* and practicing the eight constituents is the Truth of the Path (*magga saccā*).

'Non-arising is bliss' (*anuppādo nibbānam*) but how to develop insight according to the Path to fulfill the cherished goal of cessation? In view of the fact that existence has sprung from its cause, which is craving for existence, one must diligently cultivate an abhorrence of existence. One should contemplate hard to realize the dangers inherent in all forms of existence the ageing, illness and death that rebirth entails; the impermanence, ill and unreality or impersonality of the five aggregates with a view to gaining insight into them. A feeling of dissatisfaction with and disgust for them will come in due course. This will lead to an extinction of craving and its allied evils (vanity and wrong view). When craving becomes extinct, clinging does not arise. *Kammic* actions are stilled. The result is the Knowledge of the Path. Herein, it should be noted that insight into the truth of *dukkha* (on contemplating the dangers of ageing and death, etc.) automatically discerns the impermanent and unreal or impersonal (*anatta*) aspects of existence.

When the Truth of *Dukkha* is discerned, Personality-belief, *Sakkāya ditthi*, is dispelled. Of this the commentary puts it as follows:-

"The Path-Knowledge discerning the truth of *dukkha* dispels Personality belief which arises on account of being possessed by the defilements. How? Through

rightly seeing all conditioned existence as merely a heap of *dukkha* (with the three salient characteristics of impermanence, painfulness and impersonality).

> *(Dukkhañānam pariyutthānābhibhāvana vasena sakkāyaditthim nivatteti. Kasmā suddha sankhāra puñjadassanato).*

- *VisuddhiMagga,* Vol. II, p. 142.

The argument is: on seeing rightly that there is no being or life apart from mind-and-matter which are really evil (*dukkha*), the wrong view of Personality-belief is repelled. How does it happen? Because one sees by direct experience through the Path-Knowledge that there is nothing that one can exercise real control over the aggregates so as to keep off ageing, disease or death, and that these aggregates are indeed transient, unsatisfactory and unreal (*anatta*) in the sense of a personal identity.

When the Truth of the Origin of *Dukkha* is discerned, the wrong view of annihilationist belief is dispelled. This is stated in the commentary as follows:-

"The Path-Knowledge that enables one to discern the Truth of the Origin of *Dukkha* has the effect of dispelling the wrong view of annihilationist belief (*uccheda ditthi*), which regards present life alone is real, that the being is extinguished at death, How? Through rightly seeing the uninterrupted process of the causal relation of the aggregates."

> *(Samudaya ñānam uccheda ditthim nivatteti. Kasmā hetuphala sambhan dha aviccheda dassanato.)*

- *Visuddhi-Magga*, Vol. II, p. 142.

The argument is this: when the Path-Knowledge discerns that craving is the origin of all troubles it knows that the *kammic* forces and their resultants are responsible for the arising and falling of the five aggregates; and that after all there is no living entity at any time apart from mind-and-matter constituting the five aggregates.

When the Truth of Cessation is discerned, the wrong view of eternalist belief (*sassata ditthi*) is dispelled. The commentary puts it thus:-

"The Path-Knowledge discerning cessation of rebirth, i.e., the bliss of birthlessness that is *nibbāna*, dispels the externalist belief that beings exist and that they are eternal, their soul transmigrating from existence to existence. How? Through rightly seeing the cessation of the five aggregates as a result of the cessation of the factors such as *kamma* etc., that cause them."

When the Truth of the Path is attained to, the wrong view of (moral) inefficiency-of-action (*akiriya ditthi*) is dispelled. Of this the commentary puts it as follows:

"The Path-knowledge drowns out the wrong view of (moral) inefficiency-of-action. How? Through direct knowledge that one's own action (of the eradication of the defilements such as greed, anger and delusion) results in the Peace (*nibbāna*) that is realized here and now."

> (*Magga ñanam akiriya ditthim nivatteti. Kasma atthakarakassa paccakkhadassanato). - VisuddhiMagga*, Vol. II, p. 42

Thus, it will be seen that the realization of the Four Noble Truths dispels all the 62 kinds of wrong view such as Personality-belief, annihilationist belief, eternalist belief, (moral) inefficiency-of-action belief, etc.

Further, the Four Noble Truths remain the constant object of *ariya* thought, i.e., the domain if the Noble One's thinking. The commentary says:-

"That which afflicts, (i.e., *dukkha*), that which is the cause or source (*samudaya*) of affliction (i.e., craving), that which is Peace (i.e., *nirodha* or cessation), and that which is conducive to liberation (i.e., *magga*, the Path-practice) indeed are the range of thought-objects for the knowledge of the Noble Ones."

> (*Bādhana pabhava santi niyyānappākarena ariya ñānassa gocaro hoti yeva).*

- *VisuddhiMagga*, Vol. II, p. 127

The Buddha has exhorted the *bhikkhus* to devote their thoughts to the four Truths, vide *Maḥāsatipatthāna Sutta* in the chapter on the Truths.

Such reflection on the Four Noble Truths is the practice of mindfulness for insight into the *Dhamma* (*dhammanupāssaṇā satipatthāna*). It is also one of the thirty-seven factors required for enlightenment (*bhojjhanga*) namely, the factor of investigation (*dhammavicaya*). The commentary states thus:-

"That which investigates or examines the Four Noble Truths is the enlightening factor of investigation."

> (*Catusacca dhammo vicinatīti dhammavicaya sambojjhango).*

- *VisuddhiMagga,* Vol. II, p. 168.

To elaborate the above :

By investigating the Four Noble Truths is meant pondering well on the facts that all forms of existence in the three spheres if existence (i.e., the sense sphere, the fine material sphere and the formless sphere) are subject to affliction that craving, the evil attitude belonging to one of the eight classes of conscious-ness rooted in greed or attachment (*lobha*), is the origin of such affliction (*dukkha*); that the cessation of affliction through the cessation (*nirodha*) of craving is really peaceful or happy (*santi*), the character of *nibbāna*; that the practice conducive to such cessation is the practice of the Path (*magga*).

For further affirming or establishing the Truth, the commentary states thus:-

"*Dukkha* has the character of affliction or oppression. Its function is to torment. It is manifested in birth or becoming."

> (*Baḍānalakkhanam dukkhasaccam santappanarasam pavattipaccu patthḥānam).*

- *VisuddhiMagga*, Vol. II, p. 162

The wise man, on searching the truth about existence with an open mind, i.e., an investigative attitude, is bound to see the truth that it is due to birth that ageing, disease and death occur, with consequent sorrows and the hazards of falling into the four sub-human planes of miserable existence (*apāya*). If there is no birth, all these troubles cannot arise. Thus the bane of birth and the peace of its cessation will become evident. Thus, investigation is a very appropriate (and necessary) factor for one in training along the Path for advancing towards higher Knowledge.

"The origin (*samudaya*) of *dukkha* i.e., craving is characterized by birth (*jāti*) which is the beginning of the troubles of all existence. Its function is to get one always involved in or tied up with trouble – trouble owing to suffering, (*dukkha dukkha*) trouble owing to changeability or corruptibility (*viparināma dukkha'*),trouble owing to troublesome involvement (i.e., (volitional activities) of life (*sankhara dukkha*). It is manifested as obstacle or drawback to escaping from the round of rebirths".

(*Pabḥāva lakkhanam samudayassaccam dukkha anubhandhana rasam palibodha paccupatthḥānam.)*

- *Vibhanga Atthakathā*, p. 79.

Hence, craving has been likened to the ever flowing river and the great ocean that never gets filled up, to exemplify its unsettledness.

Nibbāna has the characteristic of peace or Tranquillity (*santi*), or of putting a stop to the round of *dukkha*, or of unconditioned-ness. Its function is to stabilize, or to provide security to one who dreads existence by way of shelter, refuge or haven, thus lending support or relief. It is manifested in the unique *dhamma* where there is no sign or trace (*nimitta*) of sentient existence."

(*Santilakkhanam nibbānam nivattilakkhanam vā asankhatalakkhanam ṿā accuti rasam assāsakaranarasam vā animitta paccupatthānam.)*

- *VisuddhiMagga*, Vol. II, P. 126-139

See also *Vinhanga Atthakathā*, p. 79.

Existence implies destruction. Non-existence means non-destruction. There is not a trace (sign) of any aggregate in *nibbāna* to be destroyed.

Note briefly:

All troubles arise only in the body, the five aggregates.

When no aggregates exist, where could trouble arise?

Nibbana, cessation of all troubles,

Therefore means the exhaustion of becoming

> When, after dissolution of the present aggregates, no trace of them remains.

"*Niyyạ̄nalakkhanam magga saccam kilesappahāna rasam vuttḥānapaccupa ttḥānam*.

"The Path has the characteristic of lifting (lit., 'conveying') one out of the round of rebirths. Its function is to destroy the recurrence of defilements (*kilesa*) such as ignorance, craving, clinging, etc., which cause rebirth and all sorts of troubles and woes. It is manifested in releasing one from the vicious circle of the recurring defilements, recurring *kammic* actions and their resultant of recurring births. In short, it is manifested as the (only) escape from the snares of *samsāra*."

Of the Path-practice, Right Understanding, which discerns the Four Truths, is the essential constituent of the Path-Knowledge. This Knowledge destroys ignorance,

craving and wrong view which constitute the round of rebirths, and therefore extricates the worldling from *dukkha*.

Vatta means 'recurrence', or 'succession'. The three rounds of evil reciprocate in the following manner: - Ignorance of the Truth (*avijja*), the deluded view of 'I' or Personality-belief (*attaditthi*) and craving for existence, etc., (*taṇhā*), constitute the round of defilements or *kilesa vatta*. Due to the influence of these defilements, the worldling goes on doing volitional acts, both good and bad, thereby incurring *kammic* forces. This is the *kamma vatta* or the round of volitional actions. As a result of one's own actions, fresh existences arise in the thirty-one planes. This round of rebirths is called *vipaka vatta* 'round of resultants'. Thus rebirth never ends. This is a hopeless state of affairs (unless one gains the Path), for willy-nilly, one is thrown about from one birth to another ad infinitum, where ageing, disease and death take place as of sheer necessity. And one is driven to all sorts of activities for the sake of sentient existence. (For existence-any existence-is thickly laden with greed, craving, vanity, and a host of kindred defilements).

It is only when Right Understanding of the Path Knowledge is gained that the dangers and the full implications of those reciprocal rounds of evil are discerned. In that instant the root-cause, craving, is cut off, and the resultant round comes no more, i.e., the process of rebirth is put to a halt.

The Unique Character of Tranquillity of *Nibbāna*

The unique character of tranquillity (*santi lakkhana*) of *nibbāna* will be dealt with here.

"*Nibbāna* is characterized by a extinguishing of the fires of passion, a unique class of tranquillity". (*Nibbānam santi lakkhanam*).

What is meant by tranquillity? In any form of sentient existence, the eleven fires of passion such as lust (*rāga*) are burning fiercely all the time. In *nibbāna* there is no sign even of existence where these fires can arise. Being so devoid of the fires, it is said to be cool. Again, the five aggregates, being caused or conditioned, are subject to change – from birth to death and birth again, endlessly which is actually troublesome, wearisome, and painful. In *nibbāna* there is no conditioned existence, no trace of any aggregates. Hence the painful process of birth is extinguished. That is why *nibbāna* is said to be peaceful in the ultimate sense.

Analyzing One's Body in the Ultimate Truth

Now here is a practical method of contemplating one's body in the ultimate Truth.

Contemplate your own hair on the head, body-hair, foot nails and finger nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinews, bones, bone-marrow, heart, liver, midriff, spleen, lungs, bowels, entrails, gorge, faeces, and brains – constituting twenty aspects or parts of the body with the essential quality of extension (*pathavi*):

Or on bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, grease, spittle, snot, oil of the joints, and urine - constituting twelve aspects or parts of the body having the essential quality of cohesion (*apo*):

Or on the four various types of heat in the body having the essential qualities of heat (*tejo*), namely: the quality of causing heat (*santappana tejo*), the quality of growing old or decaying (*jirana tejo*), the quality of causing severe heat (*dahana tejo*), and the quality of digestive heat (*pācaka tejo*):

Or on the six various types of motion in the body having the essential qualities of motion or wind (*vāta*) namely: the ascending motion (*uddhangama vāta*), the descending motion (*adhogama vāta*), motion pertaining to the abdomen (*kucchita vāta*), motion pertaining to the large and small intestines (*kotthāsaya vata*), motion pertaining to the limbs and organs (*angamangānusārī vāta*), and inbreath-outbreath (*assāsa-passāsa vāta*).

Thus, the 20 qualities of extension, the 12 qualities of cohesion, the 4 qualities of heat, and the 6 qualities of motion (wind), comprising 42 aspects of the Four Essential Elements plus one's body organs such as eye, ear, nose, tongue, limbs, etc., that constitute materiality (*rūpa*) aggregates;

Or the aggregates of feeling (*vedanā*) that is capable of feeling pleasant or unpleasant feelings;

Or the aggregates of perception (*saññā*) that takes cognisance of things felt;

Or the mental property of volition that leads all the actions, big or small (*sankhāra*); (*sankhāra*, as one of the five aggregates, implies 50 of the 52 mental properties, excluding feeling and perception).

Or the mental aggregate of consciousness (*viññana*) the capacity to be aware of all things that are the objects of the six senses.

All of them should be contemplated as being conditioned, and are therefore subject to birth, decay and dissolution, hence in the ultimate analysis, unsatisfactory, painful (*dukkha*).

Previous craving, i.e., craving in previous existences, has been responsible for the present existence. This defilement of craving must be contemplated on as the true cause of existence which is *dukkha*.

The cessation of existence, implying the six sense-base, together with the quelling of (the defilement of) craving should be contemplated on as the Truth of Cessation.

The practice conducive to such cessation is the Truth of the Path. This practice is headed by Right Understanding, including eight factors, which consists in reflecting mindfully the natural properties of material and mental phenomena which are represented in present existence (such as hardness, touch, etc.) as well as their three inherent characteristics of impermanence, painfulness and impersonality not-self). Such reflecting has the effect of eradicating craving for existence.

It needs to be warned here that in contemplating on the composite body of mind-and-matter, one should try to dissociate any part thereof – say, eye, ear, or nose, etc., - from oneself. This sort of attachment is, after all, craving coupled with wrong view or delusion. So long as there is any trace of attachment to the aggregates as belonging to oneself or pertaining to oneself, future births are bound to follow, bringing in their train the usual troubles and suffering.

The present aggregates and the sense-bases (eye, ear, etc.) must be viewed with dispassion and complete detachment. They are in reality not any body's self, not the property of anyone. They are in the ultimate sense transient, woeful, unreal (having no personal entity). They are indeed a bundle of troubles. Contemplating hard in the correct way, one loses interest in them. One loo- sens one's grasping on them. Craving and wrong view become expelled. Doubts are cleared, and one attains the Path (beginning with *Sotapatti*), here and now.

The Difference in Practicing for Stream-entry and for the higher Path-Knowledge.

The difference in practicing for Stream-entry and for the three higher Path-Knowledge will be explained now.

The requisite Knowledge for Stream-entry (*sotapatti magga ņāna*) is discarding of wrong-view of I-consciousness or misconception about a personal identity. This is not attained to unless the Four Noble is understood and the doubts about their veracity cleared. When the Right Understanding about *Dukkha* is seen (*dassana*) the delusion of personality-belief or *sakķāyaditthi* that needs to be cast away (*pahātabba*) is instantly cast away. This being so, whether *bhikkhu* or lay person, a proper understanding of the Four Noble Truths is the essential thing to attain to Stream-entry. Lay persons may do well if they are able to also eradicate lustful passion (*ķāmarāga*), ill-will (*vyāpāda*) and distractedness or restlessness of mind (*uddhicca*). However, in case, they are unable to do so, and still cannot leave householder's life,

they can yet manage to attain to stream-entry if they master a sound knowledge (through insight) of the Truth. Knowledge of the Truth can be gained by contemplating in the manner described earlier on, thus:

“Because one craves for being,

“Rebirth and all *dukkha* arise.

Abandon the craving,

And there ends *dukkha*.”

On advancing to the three higher stages of the Path-Knowledge, the Knowledge of the Truth, having already gained at the first stage, does not require further practice for its discernment. What is needed is elimination of the remaining defilements such as lustful passion, ill-will, etc., through deeper insight development. Thus the difference in the basic requirements between the practice for Stream-entry, the First Path, and the three higher Paths, should be noted.

Examining Oneself Whether One Has Attained to the Path or Not.

One can examine oneself whether the Path has been gained or not, by applying the Buddha’s words on this point, as taught in *Anattalakkana Sutta*. It runs as follows:-

> “Seeing thus, *Bhikkhus*, the well-taught Noble disciple is disgusted with materiality, disgusted with feeling, disgusted with perception, disgusted with mental formations, disgusted with consciousness: so being disgusted, he is dispassionate (detached); so being dispassionate (detached) he is liberated. When (the mind is) thus liberated, there comes the reviewing knowledge, “this is liberation”. And he understands, “Birth is now ended; the Noble practice has been fulfilled; what was to be done has been done; nothing remains to be done for this Noble Path.”*
>
> *(Evam passam bhikkhave sutavā ariyạsāvako rūpasmimpi nibbindati vedanāyapi nibbindati saññāyapi nibbindati sankharesupi nibbindati viñanasmimpi nibbindati. Nibbindan virajjati virāgā vimmuccati vimuttasmin vimuttamhiti ñānam hoti khinā jāti vusitam brahmacariyam katam karanīyam nā param ittatthāyāti*).

It may be added here that when insight-knowledge brings weariness for existence the Path-Knowledge of dispassion, an absence of passion (*virajjati*), arises. As a result of this Path-consciousness (*magga citta*) there follows, instantly, the Fruition-consciousness (*phala citta*) of liberation from all defilements (*vimuccati*). This consciousness is then reviewed and confirmed by

* "*Na param ittatthāya*": lit., 'nothing remains to be done for this'. This last phrase, the commentary points out, the three possible meanings: viz: (1) No further work for purification remains; (2) no further existence is forthcoming; (3) there is nothing beyond this for a designation of the conditions of this existence. The first interpretation is adopted here. (Translator)

the reviewing-knowledge (*paccavekkhana ñāna)*. 'Nothing remains to be done' means, there is no defilement that remains to be quelled.

When a *yogi* can discover for himself truly that such consciousness has indeed arisen in him, he also can ascertain for himself whether the Path-practice has been fulfilled or not.

Ledi Sayadaw's Methods of Reviewing One's Attainment

Ledi Sayadaw, in his well-known treatise on the Ultimate Truth entitled '*Paramttha Sankhepa'*, gives the following method for reviewing ones own attainment of the Path-Knowledge:-

> "The reviewing-knowledge discerns these five things:- (1) the Path-consciousness, (2) the Fruition-consciousness, (3) *Nibbāna*- consciousness, (4) which defilements have been eradicated, (5) which defilements remains to be eradicated for absolute purity."

For instance, one who attains the First Path (*sotapatti magga*), on reviewing the five aggregates, discerns: (1) that he has attained to *sotapatti magga*; (2) that he has had Fruition knowledge of *sotapatti magga* (*sotapatti phala*) (3) that he has realized *nibbāna* even while the five aggregates are still present (*saupadisesa nibbāna*). This realization comes in either of these three ways:- one is released from the two defilements, *ditthi* and *vicikicchā*, through comprehending '*anicca'*, impermanence by endorsing the unconditioned state (*animitta vimokkha*)-, or through

comprehending *dukkha*, woefulness, by endorsing passionlessness (*apanihita vimokkha*); or through comprehending *anatta*, impersonality, by endorsing 'voidness' (*suññata vimokkha*).

(See Chapter below).

(4) That he has destroyed the vilest and most pernicious defilements of wrong view and doubt about the Truth; (5) that he has these eight defilements remaining to be destroyed, viz.: greed (*lobha*), anger (*dossa*), delusion (*moha*), vanity (*mana*), sloth (*thina*), mental restlessness or distractedness (*uddhacca*), shamelessness (*ahirika*) and recklessness or lack of moral dread (*an-ottappa*).

NB: (1) 'Greed' here means attachment not associated with wrong view,

ditthigata vippayutta.

(2) 'Recklessness' here is an absence of dread for the consequences of one's misdeed.

If, on self inspection at the reviewing thought-moments, one can honestly say to oneself such and such states are ascertainable, the Path-Knowledge of the four stages becomes assured.

Criteria for Judging Attainment to Stream-entry per the

Mirror Discourse, *Salayatana Samyutta*

The Buddha has taught, in connection with the six sense-bases, certain criteria for self assessment as to whether one has established oneself on the Path. *Vide Salayatta Samyutta*, the Mirror Discourse. It goes thus:-

A *sotapanna* or one who has entered the stream of the Path-Knowledge has these characteristics:-

(a) He has implicit and unshakable faith in the Buddha, the *Dhamma* and the *sangha*, when he reveres greatly;

(b) He keeps the five precepts soundly, to the approval of the Noble Ones;

(c) He is not deluded by the wrong view of 'I – consciousness' (*sakkāyaditthi*);

(d) He has experienced the Fruition-consciousness of *sotapatti magga*;

(e) He is precluded (by his own *kamma*) from the four miserable states of existence (*apāya*), and so destined for birth only in the seven fortunate existence (*sugati bhumis*);

(f) After having arisen from the Fruition – consciousness of *sotāpatti*

magga, he is bound to advance to the three higher *maggas* (Path-Knowledges).

These are points which one should consider by way of self-appraisal – just like looking into the mirror to see whether there are blemishes or not on one's face. Hence this is a highly fruitful method of self-discipline.

When there are blemishes on one's face, as the mirror would faithfully tell you, one has the opportunity to correct oneself. If there is no visible blemish, then one is heartened by the fact and has greater esteem and regard for one's nobility.

Here, therefore, are the check-points to find out for yourself if you have gained the Path at the First Stage:-

1. Are you aware of the truth that existence means *dukkha*? Do you still have craving for existence?
2. Are you keeping the five precepts intact to the approval and acclaim of the Noble ones?

3. Are you leading an honest and conscientious life, i.e., mode of livelihood, free from physical misdeeds and verbal misdeeds?

4. Have you discarded the erroneous view that there exists a person in the five aggregates that conventionally refer to as yourself? Is it just conventional?
5. Would you hold fast to the Three Gems? (Buddha, *Dhamma*, *Sanghā*) at the risk of your life? For instance, if you were asked to utter a lie on pain of instant death, are you prepared to die rather than break the five moral precepts by lying?

If you can honestly answer 'Yes' to each of the above five questions you are a *sotāpanna*, a Stream-winner. You should congratulate yourself (for it is no mean attainment). In case you are not sure in respect of any one of those points it is a sort of self-revelation to live up to your noble aspiration under the Buddha's Teaching, *Sāsanā*.

How One Established in Fruition (*Phala*) Dwells in It.

A Noble One after having attained to the Path-Knowledge is able to dwell in the peaceful state of the particular Path-Knowledge. This is technically called 'dwelling in the Fruition of the Path'. This is possible for the Noble One whether he has also attained to the supernormal powers of concentration, *jhāna*, or not. For this mode of dwelling is concerned with *nibbāna* only. The noble one's consciousness dwells in the Peace of *nibbāna*. This is how thought process takes place:-

When the *ariyā* (Noble One) contemplates on the Fruition, 'the stream of being', or the passive consciousness representing present existence. (*bhavanga*) after the usual vibration (*calana bhavanga*), is arrested (*bhavangupaccheda*) by representative cognition (i.e., the passivity of the *bhavanga* is broken or activated by the thought – object). The mind is then contemplating on mind-and-matter complex as being impermanent, or ill, or unreal (not-self), and it ent- ers into the four, or three, thought-moments of 'adaptation' (*anulomajavana*). This stage of adaptation is followed by an unlimited number of apperceptive moments of Fruition of the respective Paths,* having *Nibbāna* as their object". These apperceptive moments are the really peaceful moments of consciousness since the mind dwells in the Calm (*santam*), the transcendence (*panītam*), the deathless (*amatam*), the dangerless (*abhayam*) the happiness (*sukkam*), the cool (*sīvam*), etc., of the nature of *nibbāna*. As compared to the hurly-burly of sentient existence, this abiding in *nibbāna* may be likened to a dip in the cool waters of a clear lake on a hot day. This abiding in the Peace of *nibbāna* is therefore termed 'the enjoyment of *nibbāna* (*nibbutimbhuñjamāna*), or 'Peace-under-present-conditions'. Moreover, the mind immersed in such sublime thought generates further merit through awareness of freedom from fresh arising (of craving, etc.) which is a form of sublime consciousness (*Mahākusala citta*) because it is 'joy tranquillized' (*pītipassaddhi*).

* 'The respective Paths' refer to any of the four Paths. Please see *Shwe Zan Aung*, 'Compendium of Philosophy', Lon. 1967, p. 70 (Translator).

How on attaining Fruition one's consciousness is fixed on

***Nibbāna* as its sole object**.

The Buddha explains how the mind dwelling in the Fruition of the Path is apperceptive of *Nibbāna*.

"Herein, *Ananda*, the *bhikkhu* is apperceptive thus: this unique element of the un-arisen, unconditioned (*nibbāna*) is calm, transcendent; here it is the pacification of all fluttering that represents sentient existence, the casting away of all appearances (*upadhi*), the exhaustion of craving, the pacification of the passions, the final extinction (*nirodho*). This is how the *bhikkhu's* apperception is proceeding."

(Idhānanda bhikkhu evam saññi hoti etam santam etam panitam yadidam subbasankhāra-samatho sabbūpadhi patinissagga tanhakkhāyo virāgo nirodho nibbānanti).

- *Anguttara Niḳāya*, (Third, Vol. p. 263.)

The above discourse tells us that while the mind abides in the Fruition it

is solely immersed in *nibbānic* consciousness. Hence, 'sustained enjoyment of the Fruition' (*phala samāpatti*) means abiding with consciousness perceiving the uniquely calm and transcending qualities or character of *Nibbāna*.

Factors Essential for Attainment of Stream-entry

For the enhancement of learned knowledge, I shall now outline the four pre-conditions that are necessary for Stream-entry, with a quotation from the Text, viz: *Digha Nikaya*, *Pāthika Vagga*, p. 190:-

> "These four factors, *Bhikkhus*, together ensure success as a Stream- winner, namely: association with people conversant with the *Dhamma*; taking instructions from those who have gained insight; keeping the mind unbiased so as to discern things as they truly are; and practicing the *Dhamma* as it has been expounded."

Some elucidations by the author:-

'People conversant with the *Dhamma'*, mean learned persons who know the true significance of the aggregates, the sense-bases, the elements, and the Truths, etc.

‘Those who have gained insight’, means those who have, through practice of the Path, gained insight into the five aggregates, the six sense-bases, the eighteen elements, the Four Noble Truths.

‘So as to discern things as they truly are’, means to be vigilant and mindful so as not to be deluded by things seen, heard, felt or conceived, into considering them as being permanent, pleasant or substantial and real, but that they are mere elements, or aggregates, etc., so that the Four Noble Truths will dawn you.

‘Practicing the *Dhamma* as expounded’, means to tread along the Path which is the only practice that can extricate a blind worlding from the quagmire of *samsaric* troubles.

The crucial point here is that lay persons, still encumbered with household responsibilities and obligations- and hence still not totally freed of passions, ill will and mental agitation- can get the benefit of proper instruction by competent teachers, and win Stream-entry.

In a Nutshell

1. Approach the virtuous ones for guidance.
2. Listen to the *Dhamma* often.
3. Keep the mind alert and pliable.
4. Tread the Path diligently, discarding the ego.

Those four factors do make a Stream-winner.

The importance of a good teacher is observed also from the following anecdote.

Once the venerable *Ananda* was extolling the virtues of a good friend or mentor, “A good mentor helps achieve half the task of the Noble practice”.

(*Kalyanamitta brahmacariyasssa upaddham*.)

The Buddha corrected this remark: “Don’t say ‘half’, *Ananda*; he helps achieve the entire task”.

Mode of Practice to attain Stream-entry

The main point about winning the Stream of the Path-knowledge is getting to understand the Four Noble Truths.

“Because one craves for being,

Rebirth and *dukkha* arise.

Abandon the craving,

And there ends *dukkha.*”

Herein the truth of the cause lies in craving for being, or for existence. Rebirth is the truth of *dukkha.* Abandonment or cessation of craving for rebirth, i.e., a real desire for cessation that comes with the Right Understanding of the Path-knowledge, is the truth of cessation. This cessation is *Nibbāna*. Repeated contemplation on these Four Noble Truths leads to insight that leaves one clear of all doubts about the Truth. This is the enlightenment of Stream-entry.

A *sotāpanna* a Stream-winner, has the three virtues of abstinence, namely, abstinence from unwholesome speech (*sammā vācā*, Right Speech), abstinence from unwholesome actions (*sammā kammanta*, Right actions) and abstinence from unwholesome (i.e., demeritorious) mode of livelihood (*sammā ājiva*). It may be noted that abstinence from unwholesome actions, so far as Stream-entry is concerned, means only abstinence from unlawful sex or sexual misconduct. Celibacy is not called for in the case of married persons. Further, personal adornments and use of cosmetics, etc., as well as meals afternoon, need not be abstained from, unless one has vowed to observe special precept-day vows of eight constituents (*uposatha sīla*). In short, lay disciples can aspire to, and attain, Stream-entry. *Visākhā* and *Anāthapindika* are the most prominent examples of lay disciples who won Stream-entry as lay person. The only thing is they enjoyed life not like the blind worldling, for they had understood what mundane existence meant, and hence known what was beneficial for the supra mundane knowledge and what was not.

Concluding Remarks on Chapter One

The reader will have noticed that in expounding the Four Noble Truths, sometimes *dukkha* is stated as the main subject of approach; sometimes its source or origin, craving, is stated as main; sometimes, cessation as main; and sometimes the Path-practice as main. This variation in presentation is aimed at driving home the Truth which, once grasped, has the effect of dispelling delus-ion and doubt, leading to Stream-entry here and now.

With reference to the Pali, sometimes direct translations are given while at certain places elaborations contained in the commentaries are given. Whichever manner is adopted, the essence is just the same. The reader should be able to benefit from them all, provided proper attention is paid to them. And it is earnestly hoped that he will.

(Here ends the First Chapter, intended for the astute reader*, on a concise but clear exposition of the Four Noble Truths, as plainly as a ruby placed on the palm of the hand, as per the author's first undertaking in the Introduction.)

- 'Astute reader': 'one endowed with a sharpness of mind', *tekkha puggala*

Chapter Two

On the Purity of View

In expounding the Four Noble Truths, what has been said in the First Chapter should serve as sufficient guide for the astute. However, for certain section of the readers who may lack such astuteness the subject will be further amplified.

The Noble Truth of *Dukkha* Explained In Terms of Purity of View

People (while in good health) move about and say or do things to their wishes. This has naturally led them into thinking that this body is their own, at their complete control and disposal. This is the delusion that must first be done away with. To this end the commentary says:-

The Commentary on Purity of View:-

Overcoming the wrong perception of a self and being able to sort out and get firmly established in various ways (to be stated later) the fact of existence as mere mind-matter, one is freed from delusion and reaches a stage of knowledge through insight. Such insight-knowledge of discerning the true nature of mind-and-matter is called Purity of View.

(Evam nānānayehi nāmarūpam vavatthāpayato sattasaññam abhibhavitvā assammohabhūmiyam thitam nāmarūpānam yathāvadassanam dithivisuddhi nāma).

- *VisuddhiMagga*, Vol. p. 232.

The main point here is that one who can throw away the veil of wrong view, coupled with craving, in regarding one's mind and body as oneself, as a living being, is called one having purity of view. One whose view is thus purified discerns *dukkha* that mind-and-matter really are.

The Nature of Mind-and-Matter

The nature of mind and matter or mentality and materiality will be discussed now.

(Q). Why is it called *nāma*?

(A). Because (i) it inclines to its sense-object; or

(ii) it reveals its own name.

* 'Astute reader': 'one endowed with a sharpness of mind', *tekkha puggala*

(*namanatthena ṇāmam ṇāma karanatthena vā naman*)

(Another explanation)

Of the four abstract realities, viz, *citta*. (mind), *cetasika* (mental concomitants), *rūpa*, (material phenomena) and *nibbāna*, the three of them except *rūpa* are classed as *nāma*.

(Q). Of those three classes of *nāma*, what is the difference between *citta* and *cetasika* on the one hand *nibbāna* on the other?

(A). In the case of *citta* (mind) and *cetasika* (mental concomitants) they are both in the subjective and objective roles in the matter of inclining or attending or 'bending towards'. With *Nibbāna,* however, it has only the object of thought – more accurately, the particular thought – moments at the instant of attaining Path-Knowledge and Fruition thereof. Hence *citta* and *cestasika* come under both the definitions given above, whereas *nibbāna* comes under only the second definition.

How does a term denoting ultimate reality, i.e., *nāma*, reveal its own name?

Let us take some examples:

(a) *Phassa*: '*phussatīti phasso'*.

> It has the nature of touching (*phusati*), hence it is named *phassa* 'contact'.

(b) *Vedāna*: '*Vedayatīti vedanā'*.

It has the nature of feeling (*vedayati*), hence it is named *vedana*, 'feeling'.

(c) *Sañña*: '*Sañjānātiti sañña'*.

> It has the nature of perceiving (*sanjanati*), hence it is called *sañña*, "perception'.

(d) *Cetana*: '*Cetayatīti cetana'*.

> It has the nature of acting on its concomitants or it determines action, (*cetayati*), hence if is called *cetana*, 'volition'.

(e) *Citta*: '*Ārammanam cintetīti cittam'*.

> It has the nature of calling its respective objects to mind (*cinteti*), hence it is called *citta*, 'mind'.

N.B.: 'respective objects' means visible object for eye, sound for ear, smell for nose, etc., pertaining to the six sense-bases (*salāyatana*).

The leadership of mind is expressed by the Buddha in these terms: "Mind is the forerunner of the (four) mental aggregates.*" (*Mano pubbangamā dhammā*).

Further:- "By mind the world is led, by mind is carried;

And the paramountcy of mind is acknowledged by all men".

(*Cittena nīyati loko cittena parikassati*

Cittassa ekadhammassa subbeva vasa manvagū)

- *Samyutta Nikāya, Sagātha Vagga*, p.36.

* 'The four mental aggregates': *Viññana*, (consciousness or mind), *vedanā* (feeling), *sañña* (perception) and *sankhārā* (mental formations). They cover all phenomena.

The Character of Consciousness or Mind

Consciousness (*viññana*) has the character of getting to know or becoming aware of sense-objects. Its function is to lead the mental concomitants. It is manifested as linking up the last thought moment (*cuti*) of one existence with the first thought-moment (*patisandhi*) of the following one. Its proximate cause lies in volitional actions of the past.

(*Vijānana lakkhanam viññanam pubbangamarassam patisandhipaccupat ṭḥānam sankharapadatthanam).*

- *Samyutta Nikāya, Sagāthā Vagga*, P. 36.

Mind represents the totality of consciousness (in contradistinction to feeling-consciousness, contact-consciousness, etc.). (*Cittam viññanakkhandho*). It embraces 89 classes of consciousness. Consciousness, therefore, is conscious of the mind also.

Mental Concomitants and Their Characteristics, etc.

The characteristics, functions, etc., of the mental concomitants will be discussed now.

Mentality or mental states (mental concomitants) have the character of inclining (bending) towards sense-objects. They function in union with the mind. They are manifested as never being separated or dissociated from the mind. Consciousness is their proximate cause.

(*Namanalakkhanam nāmam sampayoga rasam avinibbhoga paccupatthā nam viññāna padattham).*

- *VisuddhiMagga*, Vol. II, p. 159.

How many types or classes of consciousness are there?

There are 89 types of consciousness, broadly classified below:

(a) Immoral consciousness 12 types

(b) Consciousness without root-cause 18 types

(c) Beautiful types 24 types

Kāma-Consciousness (a+b+c) = 54 types

Great types (*mahaggata*) 27 types

Supramundane (*lokuttara*) 8 types

Total 89 types

How many types of mental concomitant are there?

There are 52 types of mental concomitant as follows:-

Aññasamānā 13, immoral 14, beautiful 25, making a total of 52.

Aññasamānā (*añña*, other; *samāna*, common) either one or the other types of mental concomitant is present in the 89 types of consciousness. This means either of these seven – contact (*phassa*), feeling (*vedanā*), perception (*sañña*), volition (*cetanā*), one-pointedness (*ekaggatā*) – psychic life (*jīvitindriya*) and attention (*manasikāra*) – that are common to every act of consciousness (*sabbacittasādhārana*); plus these six ‘particulars’ (*pakinnakā*) – initial application (*vitakka*), sustained application (*vicāra*), deciding (*adhimokkha*), effort (*vīriya*), pleasureable interest or joy, (*pīti*),desire-to-do (*chanda*).

“Thus these thirteen mental concomitants should be understood as ‘common to each other’, (*aññasamana*).”

The 14 immoral mental states (*akusala cetasika*) are:-

Denseness or dullness (*moha*), shamelessness (*ahirika)*, recklessness of moral consequence *(anottappa)* and restlessness or distractedness (*uddhacca*), the four concomitants common to the (twelve) immoral types of consciousness, termed *akusala-sādharana cetasikā*;

Greed or attachment (*lobha*), conceit (*māna*) and wrong view (*ditthi*), the three concomitants that always go together with greed only, and hence termed '*Lotri'*;

Hate (*dosa*), envy (*issā*), avarice (*macchariya*) and worry (*kukkucca*), the four mental concomitants that are associated with consciousness rooted in anger (*dosa-mūla citta*), and hence termed '*Docatukka'*;

Sloth (*thina*), torpor (*middha*), and doubt or perplexity (*vīckiccha*), the three mental concomitants that are associated with consciousness rooted in delusion (*moha-mūla citta*), and hence termed '*Motri*.'

Thus we have:

Akusalasādhāranā cetāsikā 4 types

Lotri cetasika 3 types

Docatukka cetasika 4 types

Motri cetasika 3 types

Immoral (total) *cetasika* 14 types

The 25 beautiful mental concomitants are:-

(a) The nineteen mental states which are common to all that is morally beautiful (*sobhanasādhārana*), viz:- (1) faith or confidence (*saddhā*), (2) mindfulness (*sati*), (3) moral shame (*hiri*), (4) moral wariness or conscience (*ottappa*), (5) detachment or non-attachment (*alobha*), (6) goodwill (*adhosa*), (7) equanimity or mental equipoise (*tatramajjhattatā*), (8) composure or tranquility of mental properties (*ķāya-passaddhi*)*, (9) composure or tranquillity

* *Ķāya* (lit., 'body') here is meant 'aggregate', i.e., mental aggregate, or *nama kāya*, in contradistinction to materiality aggregate or *rūpa kāya*.

of mind (*citta-passaddhi*), (10) buoyancy or lightness of mental properties (*kāyalahuta*), (11) buoyancy or lightness of mind (*cittalahutā*), (12) pliancy of mental properties (*kāya mudutā*), (13) pliancy of mind (*citta mudutā*), (14) Readiness or adaptability of mental properties (*kāya kammaññata*), (15) readiness or adaptability of mind (*cittā kammaññata*), (16) proficiency of mental properties (*kāya pāguññata*), (17) proficiency of mind (*citta pāguññata*), (18) rectitude of mental properties (*kāyujjukatā*), (19) rectitude of mind (*cittujjukatā*); (b) The two 'Illimitables'or *appamaññā,* viz: compassion (*karunā*) and sympapathetic joy

(*muditā*); (c) The three 'Abstinences' or (*viratī*), viz: Right-Speech (*samnāvācā*), Right Action (*sammā kammanta*) and Right Livelihood (*sammāājiva*); (d) The faculty of Wisdom (*paññindriya*) which is essentially non delusion (*amoha cetasika*).

(To recapitulate):

Aññasamānā 13, immoral 14, beautiful 25 – make a total of 52 mental states.

Of these 52, *vedanā* (feeling) *cetasika* is called the Aggregate of Feeling (*vedañakkhandha*); *sañña* (perception) *cetasika* is called Aggregate of perception (*saññakkhandha*); the remaining 50 are collectively called the Aggregate of (mental) Formations (*sankhārakkhandhā*).

(Q). Why are those fifty mental states called 'mental formations' *sankhārakkhandā*?

(A). Because they have that particular feature, indeed the chief feature, called *cetanā*, or the driving force that "directs its concomitants onto an object", so that "when *cetanā* acts, all the remaining concomitants act also*". *Cetanā* is the conditioning factor in all conditioned phenomena, briefly referred to as *nāma-rūpa* or mind-matter complex that makes the world. Hence it is responsible for the production of *kamma* – whether moral (*puñña*), immoral (*apuñña*) or unshakable (*aneñja*). It is indeed this conditioner or volition (*sankhāro*) that is called the aggregate of formations.

(*Sankhatamabhisankkarontiti sankhārā, sankharo eva khandho sankhārākkhandho*).

(Here ends a brief exposition of the four mental aggregates).

* *'Cetana'*; 'volition'. See Shwe Zan Aung: "Compendium of Buddhist Philosophy", (Lon 1967) P. 236.

The Twenty-eight Kinds of Material Qualitty (*Rūpa*)

Let us now analyse the aggregate of materiality or *rūpakkhandha*.

1. (a) The four Essential material qualities (*mahābhūta*) viz: the element of extension (*pathavī*), the element of cohesion (*āpo*), the element of heat (*tejo*), the element of motion (*vāyo*);

(b) Sensitive material qualities, viz: eye, ear, nose, tongue, and body;

(c) Material qualities of sense-objects, viz: visible form, sound, odor, taste, tangibility of material quality of extension, tangibility of material quality of heat, and tangibility of material quality of motion – making seven altogether less the three last items that have already been included in (a) above, thereby leaving only four for forward counting;

(d) Material qualities of sex, viz: female sex and male sex;

(e) Material quality of base, viz: the heart-base;

(f) Material quality of life, viz: vital principle;

(g) Material quality of nutrition, viz: edible food.

All these, amounting to eighteen species of material quality, are called 'conditioned' materiality (*nipphannarūpa*) because they are determined by *kamma* and environment.

II (a) Material quality of limitation, viz: the element of space (*ākāsa paricchedharupa*);

(b) Material quality of communication (*viññatti rūpa*) viz: bodily intimation and vocal intimation;

(c) Mutable material qualities (*viḳāra rūpa*)* viz: lightness, pliancy, adaptability (and the two media of communication ;)

(d) Material qualities according to their salient features (*lakkhana rūpa*), viz: initial formation (*upacaya*), continuance (*santati*), decay (*jaratā*) and impermanence (*aniccatā*).

All these, amounting to ten species of material quality, are called *anipphanna rūpa* because they are not predetermined by *kamma,* etc.

The sum of conditioned materiality (18 kinds) and unconditioned or un-predetermined materiality (10 kinds) makes up the twenty-eight kinds of materiality.

Among these 28 kinds of materiality, the four Great Essentials are the fundamental material elements. Of those four, the Element of extension or *pathavī dhātu*, (lit, 'earth' element), constituted by atomic particles with quality of solidity, is the basis or support of the three remaining primary or essential elements. It is just owing to the unknowing state of the worldlings that material phenomena constituted of the four Essential Elements are taken as beings, persons, I, he, man or women, and so on.

In the ultimate analysis what truly

* '*Vikāra rūpa'*: lit., peculiar, distinctive condition.

exist are the four basic qualities of extension or solidity (of *pathavī*), the cohesive quality (of *āpo*), the varying hot and cold qualities (of *tejo*) and the upholding or propping quality (of *vāyo*), which have their own natural characteristics as such.

It is just like a wood-carver's handiwork whereby various shapes and forms are carved out from the same specie of wood-say teak – so that celestial forms, human forms, animal forms and all sorts of fanciful forms are painted and lined up. Sentient existence in all the world, likewise, is mere medley of shapes and forms constituted by the four Essential Elements with the Element of extension assuming the predominant role.

In this illustration the four Essential Elements with a predominance of the element of extension are like the teak in the sculptor's hands; the *kamma* of each individual is like the sculptor; the aggregates that happen to assume the various shapes as celestial beings, human beings and animals, etc., are like the teak after being sculpted; they may vary in forms and appearance but all are ultimately the same four Essential Elements having been formed according to individual *kammas*.

(Q). Why is it called *rūpa*?

(A). Because it is corruptible (*ruppati*) on account of various factors such as heat or cold.

(*Ruppatitī rūpam*)

The Characteristics etc., of Materiality or Matter

The characteristic of materiality or matter is corruptibility on account of various factors such as heat or cold, etc.; its function is to squander or disperse; it is manifested as being insensate; its proximate cause is consciousness.

(*Ruppanalakkhanam rūpam vikīranarasam avyākatapaccupatthānam viññāna padatthānam*).

How matter corrupts:-

Matter corrupts: due to heat or cold; due to hunger or thirst; due to insect -, mosquito -, or snake-bite; or due to weathering effects such as wind or sun's radiation.

Matter is devoid of a living being or life.

(*Sītenāpi ruppati unhenāpi ruppati jighacchāyapi ruppati pipāsāyapi ruppati damsa makasa vatatapa sarīsapasamphassenapi ruppati ettha sattho vā jivo vā navijatiti*).

The Insensateness etc., of Matter

The insensateness, etc., of matter will be explained here.

Note that matter corrupts due to contact with outside agencies. But matter has no sensitivity, so it does not know of what is happening to it. It is only mind, *nāma* or *kāya*-*viññana*, that knows it.

"Matter does not have thought or sensitivity, it has not a living thing, it is without any life". – (Commentary).

(*Rūpam acetano avyākato, suñño nissatto nijjivo); - VisuddhiMagga*

Further, by 'corruptibility', is meant changeability – i.e., the previous materiality is all the time replaced by fresh materiality. This change (of course) implies decay and disappearance of the former, and the arising of fresh materiality according to particular conditions for its arising.

The corruptibility of matter originating in mind (*cittaja*), or that originating in temperature (*utuja*) or that originating in nutriment (*ahāraja*) can be seen without difficulty. However, with regard to the corruptibility of matter originating in *kamma*, (*kammajā*) it is too subtle to see. One could only make an intelligent guess. For materiality originating in *Kamma* have a continuum. It is like the fibers entwined in a rope: the fibers are entwined by the rope-maker in such a way that the ends of the fibers are never allowed to become perceptible. To maintain a uniform thickness and strength of the rope, he puts the fibers in overlapping strands so that where certain fibers end, other fibers remain to be twisted on; and so on in turn with the particular fibers. The result is the rope with seemingly no break in it even though none of the fibers is as long as the rope itself. Similarly certain materiality that have arisen at the instant of birth or genesis (*uppāda khana*) have decayed and disappeared, but certain of the materiality that belongs to the developing moment (*thī khana*) remains; and when this also decays and disappears, certain of the materiality that belongs to the moment of dissolution (*bhanga khana*) remains. The result is that a continuity of arising, developing and dissolutions of matter takes place all the time.

The commentary, therefore, says in the chapter on materiality: (the material septad) *ādānanikkhepanato vayovuddhatthangamato*. This is further explained as: *ādānanti* means birth (*patisandhi*); *nikkhepananti* means death (*cuti*)". This, too, is a subject of meditation.

During the lifetime of any living being, the process of materiality changing as aforesaid takes place from the start of life (*patisandhi*) to the very last breath (*cuti*). In fact the nascent materiality that arose at the instant of birth has vanished after a lapse of seventeen thought-moments* when the first

* the rapidity of the process of thought is inconceivable: it is the province of the Buddha only. The commentaries point out within a flesh of lightning billions of thought-moments may arise.

appearance of materiality formed by *kamma* (*kammaja rūpam*) is gone forever. The later materiality that succeeds it in turn, formed by *kamma*, disappears totally at the instant of *cuti*. For materiality born of *kamma* does not survive a given state of existence. This is what the commentary means by the corruptibility of matter.

The dissolution or perishing of life (*vayovuddhattangama*) may be considered along these lines:-

Say, a person lives a hundred years. His youth disappears after a third of that lifespan so that by middle age the materiality that made up his youth has vanished for good. Similarly, the materiality that constituted his middle age disappears when he enters the old age, the third portion of his span. The materiality of the third portion too disappears at death and does not survive his last breath (*cuti*).

Likewise, if the 100 years of one's life be considered in decades, the materiality that has existed in the first decade is no more by the second; and that of the second decade has also perished by the third; and so on.

Further, if the same life-time be reckoned in five-yearly periods, the materiality that prevailed in the first five years does not survive those five years; that of the second also is not traceable on entering the third; and so on.

Reflecting along these lines, consider materiality in terms of annual periods; this year's materiality does not survive the year, and also with the succeeding years. Thus, this month's materiality does not outlast the month; today's materiality will have perished by tomorrow; the materiality taking place in the morning cannot be found by the evening; that of the night does not last till morning; and so on. In this way the perishability of matter should be pondered on.

At this very moment matter is undergoing change due to *kamma* as well as environment, that is to say, mind, temperature and nutrient.

1. The eye, a piece of materiality born of *kamma*, while functioning properly in its sound state, has certain material quality that has undergone a change by the time the eye's power of vision declines. The same with the ear (and all the organs).

2. As regards material qualities born of consciousness (*cittaja rupa*), those prevailing while the eyes are open do not survive while the eyes are shut; those prevailing at the exbreath do not survive till the inbreath; those that prevail while the limbs or body is being bent do not survive as the limbs or body is straightened; those prevailing while the foot is down do not survive while the foot is lifted; those prevailing while one is glad do not survive when one feels sad. All mind-born matter changes whenever consciousness changes.

3. As regards material qualities born of temperature (*utuji rūpa*) those prevailing under hot climatic conditions do not survive under cold climatic conditions, and vice versa: they change whenever climatic conditions i.e., the temperatures, change.

4. As regards material qualities born of nutriment or food (*āhāraja rūpa*), their sluggishness while one is hungry disappears when one is well-fed, when the material quality changes into buoyancy, and vice versa.

(*VisuddhiMagga*, Vol. II, p. 259.)

Taking the body as a whole, matter constituting it is of such nature that the agreeable (literally, 'equable') posture at the beginning of one's sitting (or, for that matter, any

posture) is constituted by certain material qualities that are dead and gone when stiffness or discomfort (literally, 'unequable' or 'hot') has begun to be felt by the sitter. Of such generally-obvious facts that this body is all the time revealing, one should take note (with mindfulness) and cultivate a sense of serious urgency to escape from *dukkha*. Thus cultivating, one gets wearied of the ill of existence, and attachment to existence comes to be abandoned.

This section has been primarily concerned with explaining the nature of Matter; however, a discussion on the corruptibility of matter also is made here for insight-cultivation.

No Person, Being or Life Apart From Mind-and-Matter

Briefly speaking, one should view mind-and-matter thus:

"Corruptibility is the character of Matter";

"Inclining towards sense-objects is the character of Mind."

(*Ruppanalakkhanam rūpam*

Nāmanalakkhanam nāmam).

To be constantly aware of the above character of Mind-and-Matter is to be aware that apart from mind-and-matter there, in truth, is no living entity, no being as such. The commentary has put it this way:-

"Beyond mere mind-and-matter (i.e., the conscious nature of mind and the insensate materiality); (or, the corruptibility of matter and the sense-inclined consciousness), there is no other entity such as being, person, *deva* or *Brahmā.*"

(Nāmarūpamattato uddham añño satto vā puggalo vā devo vā

brahmā vā natthi).

- *VisuddhiMagga*, Vol. II, p. 288.

That is (another) way to dispel the delusion of 'I' or Personality-belief, *sakkāyaditthi*.

How the Five Aggregates are Conventionally Called a Being:

An Example.

By convention mind-matter complex goes by the name of person or being, etc. The Commentary expresses it as follows:-

> "Where the five aggregates – (i.e., the aggregate of materiality together with the four mental aggregates) – are present, convention calls it a 'being' – (but) that is mere conventional usage."

(*Pañcakkhandhe sati satteti vohāra mattam hoti*)

To illustrate: a pair of wheels, shafts, yoke, etc., are contrived to serve as a carriage when it is known as carriage. Taken separately, these components of the so-called carriage are just the body of the carriage, wheel, shaft, yoke or axle, etc. The compounded thing is, however, called a carriage. Likewise, the compounded thing consisting of the five aggregates is by common usage called a person. If taken separately by their constituents, there are only materiality, feeling, perception, mental formations and consciousness. In that case, in truth and reality there is no person or being, for it is a mere compounded thing made up of the five aforesaid aggregates. What is called person or being is just common usage.

Another illustration: Take a tree. "Is this the tree?" one might ask, pointing to the trunk. No, it's only trunk. So also this is only a branch, this only a twig, this only a leaf, this only flower, this only fruit, etc. Take any part of the so-called tree, you cannot lay hold of anything that is really tree – only trunk, branch, etc. Yet taken as a compounded whole we call it a tree, which is conventional usage only.

Viewing in another way in the ultimate sense, by whatever name does the component parts of the tree go – trunk, branch, twig, leaf, or fruit, etc., - they are the composite of eight inseparable element of matter, namely: the element of extension (*pathavī*) the element of heat (*tejo*), the element of cohesion (*āpo*), the element of motion (*vāyo*), the element of appearance (*vanna*), the element of smell (*gandha*), the element of taste (*rasa*) and the element of nutritive essence (*oja*).

Similarly with anything around us – house or monastery, pagoda or pinnacled arch, mountain or forest, land or water, gold or silver, emerald or ruby, dress or costume, mat or carpet, rice or curry – they all are mere names used by convention, yet none of them is any more or less than the eight primary elements inseparably compounded in various shapes and forms.

Matter merely has illusory substance, form, and outward appearance.

What we call by convention person or being, etc., is in the ultimate sense non-existent. For there 'lives' no individual entity apart from mind-matter complex, (*nāma rūpa*), conditioned by kammic forces (*sankhāra*), having their own inherent character and salient features. And these characteristics are not by way of shape or form at all: they are simply vestiges or marks of conditionality (*sankhāra nimitta*), as the commentary say:-

"Either in the continuous flowing process (*santati*) of the mental and physical phenomena or in their aggregation, there is the illusory effect of a composite form or body, male, female, etc., taken as an individual entity that exists in all time. But this is mere illusion. For these psycho-physical phenomena are only in a constant state of flux, each with its own distinctive formations and properties (i.e., the qualities of extension, cohesion, heat and motion, etc., of physical phenomena, and the properties of contact, feeling, etc., of the mental phenomena), all conditioned by causes. Hence the apparent 'living being' is just a vestige of conditionality, a mere figment of the mind."

(*Santatiyā samuhe ca ekatthasaññāya gahyāmanam kālantarattha yībhavena niccabhāvena ca sankhārānam sakiccaparicchedatāya ca savigga hānam viya upatthānamattam hotīti).*

- *VisddhiMagga Mahātīkā*

It is like a piece of burning stick, whirled around at night which appears from a distance as a ring of fire. Such is the illusory effect of *santati*.

The Uninformed Person Views Mind-and-Matter Complex as 'I'.

For the benefit of those not well versed in the dhammas or conditioned phenomena, some elaboration of phenomena is called for.

Hair, body hair, toe nails and finger nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinews, bones, bone-marrow, kidney heart, liver, midriff, spleen, lungs, bowels, entrails, gorge, faces and brain – the twenty aspects of the body having the essential quality of extension or *pathavī*;

Bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, grease, spittle (saliva), nasal mucus (snot), oil of the joints and urine – the twelve aspects of the body having the essential qualities of cohesion or *āpo*;

The four types of the essential element of heat or *tejo*, namely: the quality of causing feverish heat (*santappana tejo*) the quality of maturity or decaying (*jirana tejo*), the quality of high feverish heat (*dhaha tejo*), and the quality of digestive heat (*pācaka tejo*);

The six types of the essential element of motion or *vāyo*, namely: the ascending motion (*uddhangama vāta*), the descending motion (*adhoggama vāta*), motion pertaining to the abdomen (*kucchita vāta*), motion pertaining to the groups of organs (*kotthāsaya vāta*), motion pertaining to the limbs and organs of the body (*angamangānusārī vāta*) and inbreath-out-breath (*assasā-passāsa vāta*).

The above forty-two aspects of the body (20 *pathavī*, 12 *āpo*, 4 *tejo* and 6 *vāyo*) plus the organs of the body – eye, ear, limbs, etc., - i.e, the aggregate of materiality – are wrongly viewed as 'I' or 'myself', 'my own', at my disposal, etc.

Feeling, Perception, Mental formations and Consciousness – i.e., the four mental aggregates – are wrongly viewed as my feeling, my perception, etc., with the erroneous 'I-concept'.

As regards visible objects, sounds, smells, tastes and bodily touch, one is apt to believe they are enjoyed or experienced by one self, again an erroneous Personality-belief. (the experience, *vedaka puggala* concept).

As regards all forms of deeds, good or bad, one is apt to believe they are done by oneself-another aspect of Personality-belief (the doer, *kāraka puggala*, concept).

One is also apt to believe that this person that is 'I' was born on such and such a date and is living, and will continue to live till the time of death – the delusion of permanency of a being.

One is apt to believe one is able to move about and do things at one's own will – the erroneous concept of a living entity.

Thus Personality-belief arises through erroneous view of mind-and-matter with their compounded nature, occurring independently of anyone's will, functioning on their own, so that their ephemeral, unsatisfactory and impersonal characteristics are not perceived.

This erroneous view must be discarded if the personality-belief is not to overwhelm you. How is it to be discarded? By attending rightly to these thoughts, viz:-

"That this mind-matter complex is not mine; this I am not; this is not my person or self.'

(*Netam ma ma neso hamasmi nameso attā*).

Note also that Personality-belief arises from two sources: from wrong view (*ditthi*) and from conceit (*māna*). The former belongs to the four types of immoral consciousness rooted in attachment or greed (*lobha*) that are accompanied by wrong view (*ditthigatasampayutta*). This view, tenaciously held by the worldling, strongly believes that this body is mine, that I am my real self, I live at my own will.

There is a lesser belief in self which is not associated with this blind worldly view of the *putthujana*. Though dissociated with wrong view (*ditthigata vippayutta*) it still clings to a vague personal entity based on conceit. This I-concept accordingly makes a comparison of oneself with others and thinks 'I am better than him' in virtuous conduct or in attainment of concentration or knowledge, etc. Such vain views are apt to enter even the consciousness of the Noble Ones, i.e., the Stream-winner (*sotāpanna*), the Once-returner (*sakadāgamin*), and the Non-returner (*anāgāmmin*). This mild form of the ego is eradicated only on attaining *Arahatta magga*, the fourth and final stage of enlightenment.

The Five Aggregates in their Ultimate State (*sakkāya*) and the Five Aggregates Viewed Erroneously (*ditthi*): their Distinction Explained.

The compounded thing of the physical body and the mental body, (i.e., the five aggregates), (*sakkāya*) actually exists. Where this compounded body is taken erroneously as a living entity owned by oneself, controllable by oneself, such view is wrong view (*ditthi*). (*Santo samvijjamāno kāyo sakkāyo sakkaye ditthi sakkāyaditthi*). – Commentary on *Anguttara Nikāya*.

The five aggregates as existing in their own way are viewed as mere five aggregates by the Noble Ones who have discarded the wrong view and so do not cling to them as their own selves. The same aggregate when viewed by a worldling appears as a person or a self for there is the clinging to them as one's own body or self. The same phenomena therefore are viewed in two different ways. The former is to be termed

merely the five aggregates, *pañcakkhandhā*, whereas the latter is termed the 'five aggregates that are clung to', *pañcuppāddānakkhandhā*. The former is the phenomena pertaining to the Noble Ones as well as worldlings; whereas the latter pertains only to the worldlings.

The Commentary drives home the difference between the worldly view and the *ariya* (Noble One's) view in these terms:-

"The compounded body of mind-and-matter should be viewed as the thieves city (because of the prevalence of erroneous concept of 'I'); (whereas, on the other hand), *nibbāna* should be viewed as the safe city (like the royal city) because the noble one who practices the Path is likened to the chastiser of thieves. (the defilements being likened to thieves)."

> (*Cora nagaram viya sakkāyo khemanagaram viya nibbānam mahāyodho viya yogāvacaro*). (Ibid.)

The point implied in the above statement is that it is wrong view to regard mind-matter complex of this existence as self. By killing that view with the Path-Knowledge the trainer along the Path is like the general who destroys the thieves (defilements). For when the Path-Knowledge has destroyed wrong view, all other defilements are routed in due course so that rebirth is ended and *nibbāna* attained.

Only when the five aggregates remain by themselves without their being clung to, it is like the safety of the royal city.

When the Wrong View of Self Vanishes

All Other Wrong Views Vanish.

There are sixty-two types of wrong view, the crucial one being belief in self. When Self-view or Personality-belief falls away all other wrong views do not remain. The Commentary therefore says:-

"the source (lit, 'root') of all views, whether belief in eternal soul or belief in annihilationist single existence is Personality-belief or a belief in a self or individual entity or soul.

(*Attaditthi mulaka sassata ucchedayo*).

- Commentary on *Anguttārā Nikāya*

Purity of View through the analytical perception of Mind versus Matter

The Commentary points out that purity of view are attained through being able to distinguish between materiality and mentality.

“Eye and eye-sensitivity are (merely) matter. It is consciousness arising at the eye that sees visual objects. Such distinction in knowledge about mind-mater complex is called purity of view (that has rejected the delusion of ‘I’).

> (*Cakkhu rūpāyatana rūpam dassanam cakkhu viññanam nāmam evam nāmarūpam paricchinditvā ñānam ditthivisuddhi nāma*).

The same should be read on for ear, nose and tongue. With regard to body-sensitivity one is liable to get perplexed. So reflect as follows:-

The body and body-consciousness are (merely) matter (i.e., they are insensate). It is consciousness arising at the body-base that knows touch Knowledge, in being able to distinguish between mind-and-mater thus, is called purity of view, (for such knowledge clearly perceives the conditionality and lifeless phenomena that mind-and-matter really are):

> *(Kāya photthabbāyatanam rūpam kāyaviññānam nāmam evam nāmarūpam paricchenditvā pavattam ñanam ditthivisuddhi nāma*).

Mind, though dependent on Matter, is distinct phenomenon: an example.

Mentality functions on the sense-bases of materiality. However the mental and the physical phenomena are two distinct things. As the Commentator points out:-

“For example, when a drum is struck by hand the drum-sound is produced. This sound is not any part of the drum: it is quite a distinct thing by itself. The drum is devoid of any sound, the sound too has no drum in it. Even so, consciousness or mental phenomena arises due to sense-object and sense-base, both material phenomena. Although mentality arises depending on materiality, it is quite distinct from materiality. The two are different things altogether. Each does not possess what the other has, i.e., mentality is not subject to deterioration (which is the character of materiality), and materiality does not incline to sense-object (which is the character

of materiality). Just like the drum-sound arises from the drum, mentality or consciousness arises only based on the physical framework.

> (*Yathāca dandābhipahatā bherīm nissāya sadde pavattamāne aññā bherī añño saddo bherisadda assammissā bherisaddena suñña saddo bheriya suñño*).

How Contact and the other four phenomena arise.

Dependent on the eye as sense-base and its object, the visible datum, there arises eye-consciousness (i.e., the insensate materiality is the basis for consciousness in seeing color or form, etc.). The coming together of the trio- eye, visible object and consciousness- is called Contact. Dependent on contact, there arise Feeling, Perception, Mental Formations and Consciousness, the five mental states beginning with Contact.

Hence material aggregate is distinct from mental aggregate. Among the mental aggregates again, the five above-named states (contact, feeling, perception, mental formations and consciousness) are distinct phenomena, arising and vanishing separately. All these material and mental phenomena do not contain any life: they do not constitute a living entity. They arise and vanish dependent on cause. Thus the cause-effect chain of the mental and physical processes should be discerned with insight; the state of such discernment is called gaining a good grasp of the Truth or *Sammasana ñāna*.

A Possible Question

Someone might ask:

"If this body is without any life, if it is not a living being, how is that it moves about, speaks and acts at will?"

The reply to such question is thus:

The causality principle of mind-matter complex is competent enough to function as an efficient body, provided the required conditions for such functioning are present. However, the test lies in whether one could will oneself against ageing, illness and

death and keep oneself alive as long as would wish. If there were some real person, such will must be fulfilled, for who would wish for one's illness, decay and death?

"A stranger indeed is this body, since it

does not fulfill one's wish to be youthful, healthy

and alive for all time."

(*Avasatāya avīdheyyatāya ca parato*), - *VisuddhiMagga.*

For example, a son would be obedient and fulfill the parents' wishes whereas a total stranger would not. Similarly, the body cannot be asked not to fall sick, or to age, or to die.

Seeing this complete lack of dominance over the body, the truth of not-self should be understood.

Saccaka the famous ascetic challenged the Buddha with his personality-belief claiming that there is a self in the five aggregates. The Buddha asked him that if the five aggregates were his own self, could he will himself to return to his teenage youth. *Saccaka* was in a quandary: if he said that he could, (which of course he knew he could not) he would be pressed by his youthful followers, the *Lacchavi* princes, to prove his claim true. The Buddha asked a second time. *Saccaka* still remained silent. On a third asking by the benign Buddha however, he could not remain silent and admitted defeat. The Buddha discoursed on not-self by asking questions. *Saccaka* then saw light.

In fact the five aggregates- materiality, feeling, perception, mental formations and consciousness- are not a person or a being. They do not function as a being at all. So there is none who acts and none who experiences feelings. There is none who perceives things nor who feels nor who wills the actions. Yet the terms 'person', or 'I' or 'he', etc., have to be used in everyday usage, out of conventional necessity only.

The Commentator employs the following example:

"Just as the wheel, the carriage, the shaft, the yoke, etc., that make up a vehicle are collectively known as a cart, so also when the aggregates are present they are called a being by common usage"*

Personality-belief arises through the inability to discern the true nature of mind-and-matter and their ephemeral character. Their state of flux is not know-able (to an untrained mind). That is why there is the illusion that a person goes on living from birth till death. The illusion is, of course, due to the rapid series of occurrence of

phenomena as conditioned by *kamma*, mind, temperature and nutrition. No phenomenon, once arisen, remains without dissolution.

Neither Mind nor Matter is strong enough by itself,

but when in combination they are capable and competent.

Mind and matter are phenomena that are not strong or capable by themse-lves. But when in combination they can work wonders. They may be likened to a cripple and a blind man, the former was carried athwart the latter's shoulders, and thus the former guiding the way for the latter to go in the mutually desired direction.

Similarly, though mind and matter are not complete by themselves,

* *Yathāpi angasambārā hoti saddo ratho iti.*

Evam khandhesu santesu hoti sattoti sammuti.

-*VisuddhiMagga,* II.

when they are coordinated the mutual assistance between the two distinct types of phenomenon renders the composite body efficient for anything.

(That is the essence of the Pali quotation below):

> *(Yathā jaccandho nittejo dubbalo na sakena balena gacchati. Pīthasappipi nittejo dubbalo na sakena balena gamanam pavattati. Athakho aññamaññam nissāya gamanam pavattati. Evameva namampi nittejam dubbalam nasakena balena pavattetum sakkoti na khadati na pivati na byāhariyati na iriyāpatham kappeti. Rupampi nittejam dubbalam na sakena balena pavattetum sakkoti na khadati na pivati nabyāhariyati na iriyāpatham kappeti. Athakho rūpam nissāya nāmam pavattati nāmam nissāya rūpam pavattati nāmassa khaditukāmatāya pivitukāmatāya byaharitukamatāya iriyāpatham kappetukāmatāya rūpam khādati pivati byāahariyati iriyapatham kappetīti).*

-*VisuddhiMagga*, Vol. II, p. 230

How Mind and Matter coordinate to accomplish desired ends.

In fact, mind that knows the visual object arises dependent on the eye. The body does the function of eating, dependent on the mind deciding to eat. Likewise, when mind decides (to eat, to drink, to speak or to make any bodily movement,) the body eats, drinks, speaks or moves accordingly.

Thus, incompetent though mind or mater is by itself, they complement each other perfectly.

The Mutuality of Mind and Matter: example of man and boat.

VisuddhiMagga further illustrates the mind-matter mutuality by the following simile:-

"Just as people cross the river in a boat (lit. 'depending on' the boat), the mental body of the five mental states, i.e., contact, etc., arises dependent on the physical phenomena. In the same way as the boat gets to the other side of the river through the agency of the people (lit., 'dependent on' the people), so also, physical phenomena arise in their various activities dependent on the mind. The mutuality of mind and matter is (therefore) just like the mutuality of man and boat. Thus should it be known."

(*Yathāpi nāvam nissāya manussa yanti annave. Evameva rūpam nissāya namakayo pavattati. Yatha ca manusso misāya nāvāgacchati annave. Evameva nāmam nissaya rūpakāyo pavattati. Ubho missaya gacchanti manussā nama ca annave. Evam nāmañca rūpañca ubho aññoññanissitāti).*

- *VissuddhiMagga*, Vol. II, p. 232.

Neither Mind nor Matter can function alone: example of a puppet.

In spite of the efficiency of the mind-matter complex in the various movements, neither mind nor matter actually exerts. Their movements are governed by certain condition only. Of this the Commentary says:-

“A puppet made of wood is lifeless, listless and inanimate. However, since it is worked by a set of strings, it appears to go, to stand, or make exertion in different ways. Similarly, mind-and-matter are devoid of any life, listless and inanimate. As a matter of fact, they function together, through mutual dependence only.”

(*Yathā dāruyantam suññam nijjivam nirīhakam. Atha ca pana dārurajjuka samāyogena gacchati pi titthati pi sa īhakam sa avyāpāramviya khāyati evamidam nāmarūpam suññam nijjivam nirīhakam atha ca pana aññamaññam nissāya pavattatiti)*.

- *VisuddhiMagga*.

In a puppet show the wooden puppet is just like the materiality in a so-called being; the puppet-manipulator is like the mind. The puppet-manipulator without a puppet cannot work; the puppet without a manipulator cannot work either. Similarly, materiality alone cannot function without mentality, and vice versa. The two phenomena must complement each other.

Put in another way, puppetry is performed by three factors- the puppet, the strings and the man pulling the strings. Similarly, bodily functions are caused to proceed through the coordination of the physical body, the mind and the element of motion (*vāyo dhātu*).

Mind-and-Matter is in reality devoid of life

Let us take a practical instance.

While we are eating, - the consciousness (of the eating) is like the puppeteer; the element of motion (prevailing at that moment) in the hand is like the puppet-strings; and the bodily function of eating is like the (wooden) puppet. When you gain insight into this truth, you will find no person who eats, nor any one who enjoys the meal (i.e., who experiences the eating whether approvingly or disapprovingly). Under the leadership of mind, the element of motion, together with the three co-existent elements-the element of extension, the element of cohesion and the element of heat, - act conjointly so that what is called eating is accomplished.

In the body there co-exist the two phenomena – the conscious mentality and the insensate materiality. Neither of them is a being or a life. This truth has been stated in the Commentary thus:-

“In truth and reality there exists mentality (that inclines to sense-objects) and materiality (that is insensate and that provides the physical base for consciousness). In neither of the two does exist a being or a man. The two in their composite existence are like an elaborate mechanism without a life of its own. The compounded body of mind-and-matter is a mass of suffering *(dukkha*) not different (in the ultimate sense) from a heap of dry grass or twigs.

(Nāma rupañca idatthi saccato na hettha satto manujo ca vijjati suññam idam yantāmivābhisankhatam dukkhassa puñjo tinạkatthasādisoti).

- *VisuddhiMagga*.

Functioning of Mind-and-Matter wrongly Conceived as

Activities of a Being or a Person: Simile of card and draught-oxen.

Although we speak of someone or some living thing doing something – going, coming, etc., - in the ultimate sense it is merely the conditioned processes of mind-and-matter that we are referring to. The commentary uses the simile of cart and draught-oxen thus:

In an ox-drawn cart it is actually the draught oxen that go or that stop, yet by convention we speak of the cart going or stopping. Similarly, where consciousness and the element of motion arising from consciousness make a movement we say someone moves, etc. To quote the passage:-

“Just as when the draught oxen go or stop it is said that the cart goes or stops, so also when there arises in the mind the will to go the element of motion pervades the body (through the necessary organs) signifying the will. This produces the motion of going. In this way the body, under the pervasive influence of the mind intent on a certain movement, such as going through the activation of the element of motion, makes the various movements. Thus it is said that someone goes or stands or sits or lies down, which of course is popular usage only.”

(*Evameva gacchamiti citte uppanne vāyodhātuvipphārena viññattim janayamānāya uppajjati. Iti cittakriyivāyodhātu vipphārena gamanathāna nisajja sayanāni uppajjanti. Tasmā satto gacchati satto titthati satto nisīdati satto sayati iti vohāramattam hotīti).*

- Commentary *on Digha Nikāya*, etc.

“In this way, thanks to the mind-activated element of motion, like the sailing boat sailing with the force of wind, or like the pulling of the strings of the puppet, the body, having pervaded by mind-activated element of motion or wind element, receives signals to move. This signal or message is then given effect to by the respective organs. So the various movements such as going, standing, sitting or lying, etc., take place.”

(Itī cittakriyavāyodhātu vipphārena mālutavegena nāvāya gamanamvīya suttakaddhanavasena dāruyantassa hatthapādasamañjanam yathā evam cittakriyavāyodhātu vipphāra vasena gamana thāna nisjja sayānāni hotīti). (Ibid.)

Only when the difference between the ultimate truth and conventional usage is distinguished can one discard the erroneous view of a living entity or a being with a life of its own. Until then there persists the deluded concept of someone who acts and someone who experiences things. The commentary has explained as above with a view to seeing the reality of things as they truly are, so that the non-existent person or being or some ‘actor’ (doer) or some ‘experiencer’ (sufferer) may be abandoned and doubts about the truth cleared.

Concluding Remarks on Chapter Two (on Purity of View)

Thus discriminating the reality from concept or usage, through different methods of approach, the erroneous perception about a false ego, a living being, will be overcome; and this kind of delusion-free insight-knowledge, perceiving mind-and-matter in their true nature, is called ‘purity of view’.

This purity of view is essential to enlightenment because so long as one sticks to the belief in a person or a self of one’s own, the Truth of *Dukkha* can never be realized. This tenacious hold on a false concept of self is first to be abandoned. Purity of view (therefore) is very much against worldly usage. But this is the Buddha’s teaching. No wonder that the Buddha was called a ‘censorious person’ (*Niggayhavādī*) by alien believers.

The Buddha points out the need to distinguish the ultimate truth from conventional truth, seeing that conventional truth is misleading and detrimental to enlightenment. Those who hold wrong beliefs, however, take exception to the Buddha’s teaching. They accuse the Buddha as being arbitrary and censorious, negating other doctrines.

To those who saw light through right understanding, the Buddha's teaching is simply marvelous.

The commentary defines a 'censorious person' thus:

> "The Buddha censures and negates erroneous doctrines and speaks the truthful words that have the cooling effect.* that is why the Buddha came to be called by alien creeds as the 'censorious one".

(*Niggayha vadanasīlo etassāti niggayhavādi*).

Here ends Chapter Two on Purity of View.

* 'Cooling effect', means the effect of quelling the heated defilements thus leading to Peace or *nibbāna*. - (Translator).

Chapter Three

On The Cause of *Dukkha*

Introduction

Purification by Overcoming Doubt

Kankhāvitranavissuddhi.

By overcoming doubt is meant transcending all doubts with regard to past, present and future. When the view is pure about non-person or not-self nature of mind-matter composition, one discards the erroneous view that he lived in the past, he is living now, and that his soul will be transmigrated after his death, and understands clearly that the so-called being has arisen in the past due to a set of causes, and as

the past causes have conditioned the present, so will the present condition the future. Here particularly, he comes to realize that due to ignorance of the Truth, craving (for existence) and wrong view (of self) he had in the past done *kammic* actions; and as resultant, his present birth beginning from rebirth-consciousness and its consequences of mind-and-matter, the six sense-bases, contact, and feeling, have come about as of sheer necessity. In short, the direct cause of all *dukkha* reveals itself. This is the Truth of the Origin of *Dukkha* or *Dukkha Samudaya Saccā*.

Moreover, when the round of defilements is exhausted, *kammic* forces are stilled, and no resultant rebirth ensues – for, as the Commentary says. "When the cause ceases, the result arises not". (*hetu nirodhā phala nirodho*). When the origin of *dukkha* is known, *dukkha* ceases and *nibbāna* comes in sight, known by own experience. Then will fade away all stamps of wrong views, sixty-two in number, holding eternalist ideas or annihilationist ideas. Hence in this chapter we shall be dwelling at length on how doubts are dispelled. As promised at the outset, this elaborate treatment of the Origin of *dukkha* leading to purity through overcoming doubt (*kankhāvitaranavisuddhi*), should be fruitful mental exercise for the right-thinking.

The Root-cause and the Conditioning Factors

that give rise to Mind-and-Matter.

The sub-commentary '*Tīkākyaw'* explains the process of Mind-Matter occurrence as follows:-

"Mind-and-Matter arise at rebirth owing to ignorance, craving, clinging and *Kamma*. Having arisen, starting from the 'developing' thought moment (*thī khana*)*, physical phenomena arise, thanks to *kamma*, consciousness (*citta*), temperature (*utu*) and nutriment (*āhāra*). The mental phenomena arise dependent on contact between the six sense-bases and the respective sense-objects. More specifically, wholesome or meritorious deeds come to be performed due to the presence of four beneficent forces (*sampatti*) – namely, good destiny (being born as man or *deva*), good appearance,favourable times or circumstances and good efforts - coupled with wise or proper attention (*yoniso manasikāra*) and taking wise counsel. The opposite forces prevailing, unwholesome or demeritorious deeds occur. The resultant (i.e., the present) existence constituted by consciousness, materiality, the six sense-bases, contact and feeling, arise (in common parlance, present life begins) in accordance with good or bad *kamma*. Consciousness adverting or turning (*āvajjana*) to sense-objects arises due to the presence of life-continuum or 'stream of being' (*bhavanga*) and the subsequent thought processes. According to the canker – (*āsava*) free mental frame of the *Arahat*, inoperative or non-*kammic* actions (*kriya*) or benign smile

(*hasituppāda*) arises. Thus in regard to the present, the past, or the future, one comes to know the cause-effect nature of volitional acts, with reference to who holds *kamma* how dearly and at what *samsaric* cost, etc. Such discriminating knowledge about *kamma* and *kammic* action originating in craving (cum ignorance) is called Purity through transcending doubt (*kankhāvitarana visuddhi*).

Paccayapariggahoti nāmañca rūpañca patisandhiyam tāva avijjā taṇhā upādāna kammahetuvasena nibbattati. Pavattiyañca rūpam kammacitta utu āhārapaccayavasena nāmañca cakkhurūpādi nissayārammanādi paccaya vasena visesato ca (sadhammassavana) yonisomanasikārādi catucakka sampattiya kusalam tabbipariyāyena akusalam kusalākusalavasena vipāko. Bhavangādivasena āvajjānam. Khīnāsavasāntana vasona kriyājavanam āvajjānañca uppajjtīti. Evam sādhāranāsadharanavasena tīsu addhāsu nāmarūpappavattiyā paccakhādisiddhāssa kammādi paccayassa parigonhanam samudayassa saccassa vavattānam kankhāvītarana – visuddhi nāma

- *Tīkākyaw*, p. 269.

* ‘*Thī khana’*: one thought moment has three sub-moments, viz: arising or genesis (*uppāda*), developing (*thī*) and dissolution (*bhanga*).

‘At what *samsaric* cost’: *Kamma* is inexorably to result in existences or future rebirths with consequent *dukkha*. The Buddha put it thus: “If I, (i.e., the five-fold aggregates) had committed no *kamma* in previous existences, I (i.e., the present five fold aggregates) would not be in existence now.” (And) if I were to commit no (more) *kamma* at present there will be no fivefold aggregates resulting in future.”

- - *Majjhima Nikāya*, *Uparipannāsa*, *Ancñjasappāya Sutta*,

Para. 72

Knowledge Discerning the Conditionality of Mind-and-Matter in the Three Periods of Time

Conditionality may be understood with regard to the past, the present and the future as the Commentary puts it:-

“In much the same way that this body of mind-and-matter is taking place owing to ignorance, craving, clinging, *kamma*, nutriment, and materiality (such as eye, etc.) it had in the past been taking place owing to the self-same causes; in the future too it will go on like this, from precisely the same causes.”

(*Yathā idam nāmarūpam paccayato pavattati.*

Evam tītepyanāgate abhavittha bhavissati)

> Herein please note that either at present or in the past or in future it is the phenomena of materiality-and-mentality that come into being, and vanish; and there is no person or being who ‘lives’ or ‘dies’.

From Ignorance, Craving, Clinging as mother,

and *Kamma* as father, their offspring Mind-and-Matter ensues.

How the (present) mentality-and-materiality has been caused to arise, how their causes and conditions may be understood, are illustrated in the Commentary *VisuddhiMagga*, as follows:-

“The defilements headed by ignorance and craving, are sufficing condition (*upanissaya paccaya*). They are like the mother. Volitional acts done under the influence of the said defilements (*kamma*) are like the father. Their resultant (*katatta*), the five aggregates (materiality and the four mental aggregates) together with the contact and the feeling that is bound to occur in the present existence, are like the offspring (of ignorance and volitional acts). Nutrition is like nurturing (*paccaya pariggaha*) the child.

The six sense organs, the six sense-bases and their respective sense objects are the conditions for the arising of the six classes of consciousness such as eye-consciousness, etc.

(*Tassevam nibbattamānasa avijjā taṇhā upādānam kammanti ime cattāro dhammā nabbathakattā hetu. Āhāro upatthambhakattā paccayoti pancadhammā hetupaccayā honti. Tesu pi avijjādayo tayo imassa kāyassa mātā viya dārakassa upanissayā. Kammam pitā viya puttassa janakam. Āhāro dhāti viya dārakassa sandhārakoti.*

Evam rūpakāyassa paccayapariggaham katvā puna cakkhumca paticcarūpeca uppajjati cakkhuviññananti ādinā nayena nāmakāyassa paccayapariggaham karoti).

- *VisuddhiMagga*, Vol. II, p. 233

The commentator continues to explain the mental phenomena with a view to dispelling doubt about conditionality:-

"Just as the flame and the light arise dependent on the wick and the fuel-oil, eye-consciousness arises dependent on contact between eye-base and visual object. Eye-consciousness is the result (of that contact). Distinguishing between what is cause and what is result or effect is 'Knowledge that overcomes doubt or *kankhārvitarana vissuddhi*. Such knowledge dispels the delusion of *atta* and discerns mind-and-matter in their conditioned state. Thus doubt is overcome.

(*yathā telavattam paticca dīpajālā pavattanti evam cakkhu rūpārammanam cakkhuviññanassa hetu cakkhuviññanam phalam iti parichanditvā ñānam kankhāvitarana visūddhi nāma.)*

How Ignorance is the basic cause of the round of

defilements or *kilesa vatta*.

Of the three principal defilements mentioned above, i.e., ignorance, craving, clinging, the first is the crucial one. This being so, it is well that the full significance of Ignorance be made known. For, if ignorance is dispelled, other defilements die a natural death. We (again) refer to *VisuddhiMagga* for an array of elaboration on Ignorance:-

"*Avijjā* (Ignorance) means lack of knowledge of the Four Noble Truths, of the past, of the future and of the past and the future conjointly, and of the Law of Causality or Dependent Origination (*Paticca samuppāda*)."

(*Avijjāti suttantapariyāyena dukkhādīsu catūsu thānesu aññānam abhidha mmapariyāyena pubbantādīhi saddhim atthasu. Vuttñhyetam tattha katamā avijja dukkhe a ñānam dukkha samudaye a-ñānam dukkha nirodhe a-ñānam, dukkha nirodhāgaminipatipadāya a-ñānam, pubbante a-ñānam aparante a-ñānam pubbantāparante aññānamida paccayatā paticcasamuppannesu dham mesu a-ñānanti.)*

- VissuddhiMagga, Vol. II, p. 161.

Further:

"Because it leads to getting what ought not to be gotten, (i.e., demerit); and it mars one from getting or finding what is worthy of getting or finding (i.e., supramundane knowledge), it is called *avijjā*.

(Avindiyam vindatīti avijjā, vindiyam navindatīti avijjā). - Ibid., p. 175.

"Because it fails to know* that the (five) aggregates are nothing more than groups of phenomena; that the sense-bases are naturally apt to prolong the process of repeated births; that the elements lack life or soul; that the Four Noble Truths are the ultimate truth – it is also for these reasons that it is called *avijjā*.

* 'It fails to know': *avidita karoti*; lit., 'it renders (makes) one ignorant'.

(Khandhānam rasattham āyatanānam āyatanattham dhātunam suññattham saccānam tatatham aviditam karotīti pi avijjā.)

- Ibid; Vol., II, p. 157

"Because it does not come out in the ultimate (*vijjamāna*) *dhammas* such as the *khandhas* (aggregates), it is called *avijja*."

(Paramattho avijjamānesu khandādisu na javatīti avijjā).

- Ibid; Vol., II, p. 157

"Because it shows itself in the ultimately unreal (*avijjamāna*) *dhammas* (which are illusory images only) such as man or woman, etc., it is called *avijjā*."

(*Paramattha avijjāmānesu itthipurisādisu javatīti avijjā*).

- Ibid.,

"Also, it is in the nature of concealing the conditionality of things such as sense-consciousness like eye-consciousness, etc., that arise from contact betwe en sense-base and sense object (e.g., eye-base and visual object); hence it is called *avijjā*."

(*Api ca cakkhuviññanadinam vatthārammana-paticcasamuppāda paticca samuppan-nānam dhammānam chādanato avijjā.*) - Ibid.

NB: Ignorance or *avijja* is used here by way of Personification only.

The Characteristic, etc., of *Avijjā* (Ignorance)

Avijjā is characterized by the un-knowing of the Four Noble Truths, the Law of Dependent Origination, etc.; its function is to be deluded about those realities or ultimate truths; it is manifested in the concealment of Truth in sense-objects as regards their true nature (such as impermanence, etc.); its proximate cause lies in the pervasive defilements or cankers (*āsava*).

(A-ñāna lakkhanā avijjā sammohanarasā chādanapaccupatthānā āsava padatthānā).

- *VisuddhiMagga,* Vol., II, p. 159.

"This ignorance should be regarded as the chief deficiency or the main drawback (for liberation)". *(Ayam avijjā paramā vajjanti datthabbā*). This means that of all the defilements that oppress the worldling, Ignorance is the principal one.

The Buddha says: "Ignorance is the filthiest of all types of impurities"- (*avijjā paramam malam*). Impurities mean the defilements that taint the mind.

The *yogi's* first job therefore is to got rid of delusion first – i.e., of the three major defilements of *lobha* (greed), *dosa* (hate), and *moha* (delusion). The reason is, delusion or ignorance gives rise to volitional actions with dire consequences through the Law of Causality or Dependent Origination. Once Ignorance that had kept one under delusion is broken, all things fall into line. The human evils or defilements fall away gradually until they become all extinct. When the fires of passion die out, the Peace that is *Nibbāna* is grasped or realized. The Commentary explains:-

1. Until one fails to grasp the Four Noble Truths one is deluded into thinking that what is really *dukkha* is something good or desirable, and acts accordingly, thereby reaping one's own results of such acts which naturally consist of wholesome, unwholesome and those resulting in Formless rebirth (*anenjabhisankhāra*). All of these are vain efforts because they put one in the cyclic rebirth processes in existences of one from after another which, however grand or lefty, are beset with the ills of ageing and death.

2. When one is blind as to the real cause or origin of *dukkha* (i.e., existence of any form), that origin, which is none other than craving, (of which craving for existence is mainly responsible for rebirth) is fondly nurtured. How? By doing *kammic* deeds with a view to greater and mere glorious existences here- after.

3 & 4. Where the Truth of Cessation is not understood, temporary *jhanic* peace attainable in *Brahma loka* such as the Formless Sphere (*arūpa bhava*) is mistaken as *nibbāna*. Life span is some of those *Brahma lokas* are so great as to be mistaken for Eternity*. Due to failure to understand the Truth of the Path leading to the cessation

of *dukkha*, misguided religious persons resort to rite, ritual and supposedly noble conduct such as offering of sacrifices, etc.

(*Yassahi dukkhadīsu avijjāsankhātam aññānam apahīnam hoti. So dukkhe tāva pubbantādisu aññanena samsāradukkham sukkasaññaya gahetvā tasseva hetu bhūte tividhepi sankhāre ārabhati.*

Samudaye aññanena dukkhassa hetubhūtepi tanhā parikkhare sankhāre sukhahetuto maññamāno ārabhati.

Nirodhe pana magge ca aññānena dukkhassa anirodhabhūtepi gativisese dukkhanirodha sañña hutvā nirodhassa ca amaggabhutesupi yaññāmayatapādi mukhena tividhepi sankhāre ārabhati.) - Ibid., p. 162.

Craving, the Root-cause of Future Birth: an Example.

Having described Ignorance, the commentator describes the round of defilements (*kilesa vatta*) that Craving (*Taṇhā*) creates in these terms:-

"This body (of the five aggregates) is my own property. These are my wife, my children, my possessions, etc." In this manner one is led to be deeply attached (*tassati*) to things. Hence it is called *Taṇhā*".

(*Tassati mam' etanti mama santakanti taṇhā*). - Ibid., p. 220.

* 'Mistaken for Eternity': Eg., in *N 'eva saññā nasaññā-yñtana Brahmā loka* the lifespan is eighty-four thousand *Mahā Kappas*. "*Kappa*" means vast period or cycle of time. There are three kinds of *kappa*, namely: *antara kappa, asankheyya kappa*, and *mahā kappa*. The interval during which life span of man increases (due to good conduct and kind heart) to infinity and then decreases (due to immorality and wickedness) to ten years, is known as an *antara kappa*. Sixty-four *antara kappas* of the human world (which is equal to twenty of the *niraya* (hellish) world) are called one *asankheyya kappa* (lit., an incalculable cycle). Four *asankheyya kappas* equal one *maha kappa*. - *Mahā Buddhavamsa*, Vol. I. Part 1, Ran.,

The gravity of *Taṇhā*, as taught in *Paticcasamuppada* is given below:-

"Profound is the nature of *Taṇhā*, for it delights in sense-objects, is overwhelmed by them, possessed by them; binds one like the creeper; is carried away by sense-objects as by the current of the river, is difficult to satisfy like the ocean that is difficult to fill."

(*Taṇhāya abhīnandita ajjhosāna samosaritā latā nadi taṇhā sumuddha duppūrattho gambhīro*).

- Ibid., p. 159

The Characteristic, etc., of *Taṇhā* (Craving)

"*Taṇhā*, craving, is characterized as the cause (*hetu*) of *dukkha*; its function is to delight in sense pleasures; it is manifested in unsatedness; feeling (*vedanā*) is its proximate cause."

(*Hetulakkhanā tanhā abhinandanarasā atittipaccupatthānā vedanāpadatthānā*).

- Ibid., p. 159.

Further:

He who keeps Craving (*taṇhā*) as companion

Has prolonged succession of existence;

Now in this higher plane, now in that lower plane,

He finds no way out of treacherous *samsāra*.

(*Taṇhā dutiyo puriso*

Dighamaddhāna samsaram

Ittha bhāvaññathābhāvam

Samsāram nātivattati.)

- Itivuttaka, Khuddāka Nikāya

What is to be noted here is that Craving is one's mental state. Even while living in seclusion in the forest, if the recluse is attached to the six kinds of sense pleasures he is under the spell of *taṇhā*, or (as the above stanza puts it), he is keeping Craving as companion, so that he cannot escape from the evil of round of rebirth. A *bhikkhu* living amidst lay disciples, if he is not attached to anything or anyone is a really secluded one, can escape from the round of rebirths.

Wrong View (*micchaditthi*) Explained

When it is in the nature of regarding things wrongly or falsely such as what are ultimately non-existent are viewed as realities such as living beings or soul (*atta*), man or woman, etc., so that what is painful in reality is believed to be pleasant, what is ephemeral is believed to be lasting, such natural propensity or inherent inclination is called 'wrong view', *micchā ditthi*.

(*Micchā passatītī Micchāditthi*.)

Wrong view functions as pervading (lit., flowing out, oozing) the whole mind. This phenomenon is explained in the Commentary thus:-

"When one is possessed by the view that this body is I, myself; that this body is mine in regard to materiality (*rūpa*) that constitutes (part of) his corporeality or corporeal existence, one is bound to suffer the vagaries of materiality and undergo ageing, disease, death, which are always accompanied by sorrow, lamentation (physical), pain, grief and despair."

(*Tassa aham rūpam mama rūpanti pariyutthāyino rūpassa viparinam aññathabhāvo uppajjanti soka parideva dukkha domanassupāyāsā).*

- *VisuddhiMagga*, Vol.II, P. 221.

(See also *Salāyatana Samyutta*, p. 3)

When the 'cankerous misconception' *ditthāsava*, thus overwhelms one, one is deluded so that volitional acts and rebirth follow in a never-ending cycle.

The Commentary states:-

Beings who are repeatedly afflicted by ageing, disease, death and fainting through anguish have their minds filled with evil or cankerous mental sickness *(āsava*) so that they are unable to see the truth. This vicious circle of ignorance and allied defilements bringing rebirth in the three spheres of existence (i.e., the sensual sphere, the material sphere and the formless sphere), taking place since nobody knows when, declared the Great Sage (*Mahāmuni*), the Buddha, is the Law of Dependent Origination or *Paticcasamuppāda*. This cause-effect pheno-menon thus knows no end.

> (*Jarāmaranamucchāya pīlitānamabhiṇhaso āsavānam samuppāddā āvijjā ca pavattati vattamābhandha miccevam tebhumakan manādikam*

paticcaasamuppādoti pathapesi mahāmuni. Even hetuphalaparampa rāya pariyosānam nāma natthi*.)

NB: According to the *Dhamma* (i.e., in the ultimate sense) there is just a causal chain of events, yet the Buddha employs common usage in saying that 'beings' are subjected to cyclic suffering that is *samsārā*.

How Ignorance cum Craving prolong *Samsara* and how their cessation breaks the round of rebirths.

The vicious circle, however hopelessly tenacious, can be broken (with a will and under the right method). This has been described by the Commentator as follows:-

"Ignorance and craving are the twin root-causes. The twin, (the veritable 'authors' responsible for the cycle of suffering), when eradicated (through

* *Abidhammatthasangaha*, p. 54.

arahatta magga), bring the round of existences (in the three spheres) to a stop."

(*Avijjātaṇhā vasena dvemūlāni tesameva vattamūlānam nirodhena nirujjhati*.)

- Ibid., p. 53.

When Craving cum Ignorance are uprooted by the Fourth Stage Knowledge of the Path, *nibbāna* without any trace of existence, (*anupādisesa nibbāna*) is realized. Thus, where there is the cause to the round of suffering (samsaric wheel) there also is the Way of escape from it. This is the exposition by the *Revered Anuruddha*, the Commentator, and author of *Abhidhammattha Sangaha*.

The author of Sub-commentary to the above work, the Revered *Sumangala* expresses it in another way:-

"Only through the eradication of the compounded root-cause of Ignorance cum Craving, through penetrative knowledge of the Truth, there is a cessation of the process of rebirth. Hence the round of resultant births is stopped."

(*Tesameva avijjātaṇhā sankhātānam vattamūlānam saccapativedhato nirodhenaanupādahammatā-pattiyā siddhāya appavattiyā vattam nirujjhati).*

- *Tīkākyaw*, p. 240.

This means that when Truth is comprehended Ignorance disappears. The five aggregates are then seen in their true state of woefulness so there is no more craving for future existence. Ignorance and craving having become extinct, no more arising of *kamma* and resultant *khandhā* is possible. This virtually amounts to attainment of *nibbāna*.

Once this discernment of the Truth takes place, and the Path is attained to beginning from Stream-entry, one forsakes kammic deeds and devotes oneself to further eradication of defilements leading to their total extinction when birth is ended. In the case of one who fails to discern the Truth one is apt to continue clinging to existence and building up merit that will result in grand or lofty births. It is like the case of the moth gladly (and foolishly) rushing towards the flame.

The Stupidity of the acquirer of *kammic* actions exemplified.

When the causal condition of ignorance-craving-clinging has not been given up, one takes the painful round of rebirths as being pleasurable. And towards that very end, he directs his effects. Thus he does meritorious deeds as well as demeritorious deeds or misconceived merit leading to the Formless existences. But all his purposive actions are woefully misdirected. His action may be likened to the fool who leapt off the mountain-top in the hope of, or under the empty promise of possessing a celestial beauty, or to the moth that takes the glowing flame as a golden mountain and rushes towards it with dire consequences.

(Avijjā-taṇhādinam kammahetu paccayānam ariyamaggena appahīnattā samsāradukkham sukhasaññaya gahetvāna tasseva hetubhūte tividhepisankhāre ārabbhati devīcaeharakāmako viya māruppapātam salabho viya dīpāsikha vinipatam.) - VisuddhiMagga, Vol., II, P. 162.

The Various Resultants of the Various

***Kammic* Actions such as 'Weighty' *Kamma*, etc.**

The potential effects of volitional acts are of these four classes: weighty (*garuka*) *kamma*, death-proximate (*Āsānna*) *kamma*, habitual (ā*cinna*) *kamma* and accumulation (*katattā*) *Kamma*.

1. *Garuka kamma* should be noted for its great potency in that its effect. can not be prevented by any other kind of *kamma*. *Garuka* means heavy or weighty. Committing such weighty or serious misdeeds as matricide, patricide, murder of an *Arahat*, wounding a Buddha, and causing a schism in the *Sanghā* – the five horrible acts technically termed as 'subsequently-effective' (*anantariya*) *kamma* are fixed in their consequence. (The doer at death is reborn straight in the nethermost realms of torturous retribution, *avīci niraya*). On the good side, the weighty actions are the Great Types of Consciousness experienced in sublime concentration of mind (*jhāna*). The attainder of such *jhanic* concentration at death is reborn straight in the appropriate *Brahma loka*. The act is said to be serious because it is committed with volition or will. Technically, it is done with full 'impulsion' of the seven thought-moments (*javana*).*

2. *Āsanna Kamma* is the action done, or recollected immediately before the dying moment, hence rendered as 'death-proximate act'. *Āsanna Kamma* therefore is (technically) of two kinds.#

3. *Ācinna Kamma* is habituated action. It is a tendency formed by repeated action over a long period.

Habitual acts may be either good or bad. On the good side one is in the habit of giving in charity, or observing moral precepts, or developing mental upliftment (purification), or doing a good turn to others out of sheer good will, misconduct such as killing, stealing, etc.

* 'Of the seventeen thought-moments' that constitute a complete cycle of the mental process, the stage of a Perception or full cognition is called *javana* (*ju*: 'to run swiftly'). It is so called because it runs consecutively for seven thought-moments. "*Javana* as a functional state of consciousness is composed of several mental properties among which *cetanā* (volition), is common to all".

– SZA: 'Compendium of Philosophy'.

'(Technically) of two kinds': Unless thwarted by circumstance, a dying person is most likely to recall his habituated thoughts and deeds. Hence, the importance of *ācinna kamma*.

4. *Katattā kamma* is the residual of *kammic* acts other than the above three classes.

The *kamma* mentioned in the foregoing three classes are the fresh volitional acts done in the seven cognitive thought-moments. As such they belong to the active side of the present existence. *Kamma* accumulated over beginningless *samsara* that have not born fruit (*aparāpariya-vedaniya kamma*) – precisely speaking, those *kammic* deeds committed in previous existences in the five *javana* thought-moments falling between the first and the last of the seven. Hence they are predetermined or fixed. All actions that are not included in the above-mentioned three classes are also added (at every thought-moment) to the reservoir of an individual's *kamma* – to fructify at appropriate moments in future existences.

As regards the priority in taking effect:

Weighty action (*garuka kamma*) takes effect at the subsequent birth. When no *garuka kamma* has been committed in the present existence, the death-proximate *kamma* (ā*sanna kamma*) takes effect. Where there is no asanna *kamma* also, the 'indefinitely effective' *aparāpariya vedaniya kamma* has the occasion to operate.

The time when *kamma* takes effect.

The various times for the *kamma* of the various classes that take effect* will be stated here.

1. Volitional acts done within the first impulsion (*javana*) thought-moment are called immediately effective – they take effect in this existence (*dittha-dhammavedaniya kamma*).

2. Volitional acts done within the seventh 'impulsion' (*javana*) thought-moment take effect in the next existence (*upapajjavedaniya kamma*).

3. Other volitional acts take effect in one of the further existences, when opportune, until the bond of *kamma* is broken by *Arahatta magga*, when no effect remains (*aparapariya kamma*).

4. Certain *kamma* lose their potential and become defunct (*ahosi kamma*).#

(*Ditthadhamma-vedaniyam upapajjavedaniyam aparāpariyavedaniyam ahosikammañceti pākakālavasena catubbidham hoti).*

- *Abhidhammattha-Sangaha*, p. 33

* This is in fact another classification of *kamma* with respect to time of taking effect.

An exampleof definct (*ahosi*) *kamma* is when immediately-effective *kamma* does not (for certain reasons) take effect in the present existence, it automatically lapses.

The Fourfold Advent of Death and the Signs portending the Next Existence.

The Commentator describes the four grounds for the coming of death that ends an existence and the circumstances that prevail at the moment of death – the portentous signs – and how rebirth takes place.

The advent of death is fourfold; it comes: (1) through the exipiration of the span of life, (2) through the expiration of the (reproductive) *kamma*; (3) through the (simultaneous) expiration of both; and (4) through the intervention of a destructive *kamma*.

(*Āyukkhayena kammakkhayena ubhayakkhayena uppaccheda kammunā ceti catudhā maranuppatti nāma*).

- Ibid., p. 36.

The above four happenings may be exemplified by the extinguishing of a lamp thus: (1) like the exhaustion of the fuel-oil, (2) like the wick having burnt up; (3) like the simultaneous exhaustion of both; and (4) like a gust of wind blowing out the flame.

The portents for the on – coming existence are felt in the consciousness of a dying person. This is stated by the same author thus:

“Further, to those who are about to die (through any of the above-said four modes), at the moment of death, there appear in their consciousness, through any of the six sense-doors, one of the following portentous signs occurring according to circumstances:-

(1). There may be a lingering mental image recalling some vivid action, good or bad, that has been done some time in his life, that produces rebirth accordingly (*Kamma nimitta*).

(2). He may have vivid vision or sound or smell or thought etc., that he had got at the time his volitional act was committed that was instrumental in doing it, such as weapons or terrified cries or blood in respect of bloody deeds; or flowers, candle-lights, monasteries and pagodas, alms-food offerings, or sound of pagoda bells, etc., in respect of meritorious deeds (*kamma nimitta*).

(3). There may hover above or in front of him some symbol of the place he is heading for and the sort of destiny that awaits him at rebirth, e.g., a mother's womb, hellish fires or monstrous hell hounds, of *niraya* worlds, (symbolishing the *apāya*, miserable destiny), or celestial music, smells, or faces, or mansions, the wishing-tree and the like (symbolishing the *deva* destiny) (*gati nimitta*).

(*Tathā ca marantānam pana maranakāle yathā-raham abimukhībhūtam bhavantare patisañdhi janakam kammam vā tam kammakaranakāle rūpā-dikamupaladdha pubbamupakaranabhūtañca kamma-nimittam vā anantaram' uppajjamanabhave upalahbhitabba mupabhogabhūtañca gatinimittam vā kammabalena channam dvārānam aññatarasmim paccu pathati)*.

"After that, attending to that object thus presented persistently in his consciousness, there usually goes on an uninterrupted continuum of consciousness (*bhavanga*), which may be morally pure or impure, according to the particular kamma that is just about to fructify. This *bhavanga* state of consciousness is now tending towards the next becoming, which his *kamma* is entitled to."

(*Tato param tam 'eva tatho' patthitam ārammanam ārabbha vipaccamānaka kammānu-rūpam parisuddham 'upakkilittham vā upalahitabbabhavānurūpam tatthonatamva cittasantanam abhinhan pavattati bāhullena*).

Actually speaking, only such *kamma* as is reproductive of the new birth presents itself to the (dying person's) sense-door by way of renewing itself (i.e., representing the original experience).

(*Tam'eva vā janakabhūtam kammābhinavakarana vasena dvārappattam hoti*).

To one who is just about to die, at end of a thought-process, or expiry of the life continuum (*bhavanga*), the decease-consciousness (*cuti citta*) the last moment of his present existence, arises; and with his decease,* ceases.

(*Paccāsaññamaranassa tassa vithicittāvasane bhavangakkhaye va cavanavasena paccuppannabhava-pariyosānabhūtam cuticittam 'uppajjitvaāvirujjhati*.)

"At the end of the cessation, and just after it, rebirth-consciousness arises. It links up the past existence (with the new) and is set up in the next existence. This mental phenomenon (*mānasam*) is engaged upon the object (of consciousness) present at the sense-door and received by the last thought-process (as described above). It is produced by a mental activity (*kamma*); it has either a physical base, or no base. It is enveloped by whatever ignorance is latent, and is rooted in dormant craving. It is surrounded by its co-nascent mental properties (such as contact, feeling, etc.) and acts as the forerunner or the determinant to the co-existent states, providing their very basis (*aditthīnabhāvena*)."

* 'and with his decease': *cavanavasena*; lit., 'by way of departure or disappearance'.

(*Tasmim niruddhavasena tass 'anantaram' eva tathā gahitam arammanam 'arabbha savatthukam avatthukam' eva vā yathāraham avjjānusayaparikkhittena taṇhanisayamūlakena sankhārena janiya mānam sampayuttehi pariggayhamānam sahajātānamaditthānabhavena pubbangamabhūtam bhavantara-patīsandhisankhātām mānasam uppajjhamānameva patitthātī bhavantāre*.)

As *Ledi Sayadaw* tersely puts it:

"Ignorance conceals the ill of Existence;

Craving makes the new existence seem desirable;

The force of reproductive (*janaka) kamma* promptly operates.

Thus the triad – Ignorance, Craving and Volitional action –

Conspire together in bringing about rebirth."

"*Paramattha Sankhepa*" vv. 353, 354

NB: (vv. 379-381 in the revised (2980) edition, Kaba-E, Rgn.).

In v 381, the revised version reads (nDaphaqmf) instead of (nDapaomf) to when this translation is aligned.

(Myanmar translation of *Abhidhammattha-Sangaha* by *Anuruddhāthera*).

Just as soil, moisture (i.e., water) and seed-germ must be present together for a tree to grow, so also the presence of the triad ensures rebirth. The consciousness, being shrouded by ignorance, is unable to see the dangers (such as impermanence, etc.) of Existence, and delights in whatever object happens to appear at the sense-door at the point of death. The reproductive *kamma* that is opportune to operate impels the consciousness to crave for, and cling to, that object, so that the relinking-consciousness (*patisandhi vīññāna*) or rebirth-consciousness becomes established in the subsequent-existence, according to how the particular *kamma* casts.

With the *Arahats* who have abandoned the triad of ignorance-craving-volition (*kamma*), their consciousness at the point of death is not clouded by ignorance, so they see the dangers in the object of thought at the final thought-process, and are not attached to it. They have already put an end to *kamma* (i.e., volition in their acts) so that there is no reproductive force in their acts. At the time of death they enter *nibbāna*, hence their death has the significance of final extinction of the aggregates called *parīnibbāna*. No rebirth-consciousness arises after that. They then lose any trace of existence which is always conditioned. *Dukkha* has ceased. The unconditioned peace of *nibbāna*, free from arising and vanishing, is established.

The point to note here is, the aggregates of mind-matter complex cease to exist at death: they do not 'transmigrate'. What is reborn in the subsequent existence is only the kammic force that causes a fresh set of aggregates, with materiality that may be gross or fine, lowly or lofty, etc. So, mark that no being or person dies in truth. No being or person is transmigrated to a new life. In this way the wrong beliefs of eternalism and annihilationism are averted.

How the triad – ignorance, craving and *kamma*-work in unison towards rebirth is described by the commentary thus:-

Avijjā taṇhā sankara sahajehi apāyinam. Visayādīnavacchādam namana khippnampica. Appahīnehi sesānam chādanam namanampi ca. Khipane pana sankhāra kusalāva bhavantiha. Katthaci pana anuppajjamānassa khināsavassa yato patthitam nāmarūpadhammādikameva cutipariyosānam gocarabhāvam gacchati. Nakamma-kammanimittadayo).

'*Tikakyaw'* (Myanmar sub-commentary on *Abhidhammattha Sangaha*)

i. p.189 (ii) p. 408

"To those beings that are cast to the four miserable states of *apāya*, the co-existent states of ignorance, craving and volition render their consciousness blind to the impending dangers of the oncoming existence; nay, they make him like it: And accordingly the kammic force throws them off (*khipanampi*) to the miserable state.

The rest of those beings whose *kamma* sends them to the fortunate planes of existence (also) have certain extent of ignorance remaining that need to be expelled by the Path-Knowledge, and to the extent of their ignorance they too are unable to see the unsatisfactoriness (*dukkha*) in their subsequent existence and they are pleased with their lot too. With them (however) their volitions have been meritorious; hence they are cast to the fortunate existences (of human and the six *deva lokas*).

"More particularly, to those who are neither worldlings (*puthujjana*) nor 'the onces in training' (*sekkha*),* that is, the Arahats who have exhausted the cankerous pervasive evils (*āsava*) and who have stopped the process of rebirth, the sense impression that looms before their consciousness at the moment of death is only *nāma-rūpa* – the ultimate reality of mind-and-matter and the ultimate truths. Their consciousness has for it objects or ranges the arising-vanishing phenomena of mind-and-matter until the very last thought-moment which is (cuti) or death. (As such), there is no place for those signs or symbols of *kamma*, or *kamma nimitta* or *gati nimitta*. (As in the case of the non-*Arahats*)."

With the Buddha and the *Arahats*; the last thought-process at death does not receive any symbols: only *nāma-rupa* is there in their consciousness right to the last moment. With those who have attained concentration (*jhāna*) their last thought-process till the *cuti* moment is engaged in the attainment of their concentration. An *arahat* who has won enlightenment in the Path-Knowledge

* *Sekkha*: a term denoting those seven classes of *ariyas* who are devoted to *Arahatta phala*, the Ultimate Fruition in the Path-Knowledge.

but lacks in attainment of *jhanic* concentration, has his last conscious-thought engaged in the Fruition of the Path-knowledge he has gained. At death, i.e.., after *cuti* thought-moment; *nibbāna* is realized without leaving behind any vestige of existence (*anupādisesa nibbāna*).

The Various Possibilities for States of Rebirth

according to the present state of existence

The various avenues for rebirth after one's death will be briefly mentioned, based on *Leda Sayadaw's Paramattha Sankhepa*:-

(1). Those beings in the four miserable states may be reborn in any of the eleven sensual planes (*kāma loka*), pertaining to ten types of rebirth-consciousness.*

(2). Those beings endowed with *tihetuka* consciousness (Consciousness with three good roots or *hetu*) which comprise intelligent worldlings, the seven classes of noble-ones-in-training (*sekkha*), may be reborn in any of the thirthy-one planes of existences, pertaining to 20 types of rebirth- consciousness.**

(3). Those beings in *rupa lokas*, i.e. *Brahmas*, may be born in the fortunate existences under happy circumstances, pertaining to 17 types of rebirth-consciousness.#

This virtually means that; (a) they cannot be reborn in any of the four miserable states (*apāya*), (b) they cannot be reborn in any of the *asaññasatta* planes, i.e., *Brahamā* 'without perception', (c) they cannot be reborn with *ahetuka* or rootless consciousness.

* 'The ten types of rebirth consciousness': (a) Those born with (in the four miserable-sensual planes); *ahetuka* consciousness (consciousness without root or *hetu*),

(b) Those born with *ahetuka* consciousness in the seven fortunate sensual planes;

(c) Those born with *dvihetuka* consciousness (consciousness with two good roots or *hetu*) associated with wisdom (4 types); (d) those born with *dvihetuka* consciousness unconnected with wisdom (4 tupes) – thus altogether – ten types. The 8 types under (c) and (d) are termed *Mahavipaka* (*cittani*) consciousness.

** The '20 types of rebirth consciousness' : - (a) *Kāma loka* consciousness (10 types, mentioned above);

(b) *Rūpāvacara* consciousness (5 types);

(c) *Asaññasatta* consciousness (1 types);

(d) *Arūpāvacara* consciousness (4 types); totaling twenty.

The ‘17 types of rebirth consciousness’:-

1. *Mahā-vipāka* consciousness (8 types mentioned above);
2. *Rūpāvacara* consciousness (5 types);
3. *Arūpāvacara* consciousness (4 types), totaling 17.

The 9 types under (b) and (c) above are termed collectively as *Mahaggata* (*cittāni*) consciousness, or sublime consciousness.

Nothing Actually Passes On From This Existence to the Next;

Rebirth-linking consciousness takes place through

***kammic* force: some examples**

(Q). In the linking of *cuti* to *patisandhi* does anything pass on from this existence to the next? If not, how does rebirth take place?

(A). The aggregates of the past existence cease altogether at *cuti* moment: they do not pass on to the present existence. The aggregates of the present also cease at *cuti* moment and do not pass on to the next existence.

The Commentary explains the phenomenon with the following example:-

“A pupil studying at the feet of his master repeatedly hears what the master is in the habit of reciting. Those words recited by the master do not come into the pupil’s mouth yet after a time the pupil is able to repeat the same words.”

(*Yathā na ācariyamukhato sajjhāyo antevāsikassa mukham pavisati na ca tappaccayā tāssa sajjhāyo nāpi pavattatiti.)*

- *VisuddhiMagga*

Another example:

“The messenger sent by a sick person to seek the physician’s assistance drinks the magically-prepared water (meant for the patient’s benefit). The water does not enter the sick man’s stomach, yet the illness is cured.”

(*Na dute na mantodakam pītam rogino udaram pavisati.*

Na ca tassa tappaccayā rogo na vūpasammati.)

“The adornment on the face does not go to the mirror in front of the wearer’s face, yet there is the image of the jewelry in the mirror.”

(Na mukhe mandhānavidhranam ādāsatātādīsu mukhanimittam gacchati. Na ca tattha tappaccayā mandhavidhānam na paññāyati). - Ibid.

Just as the sound of the master’s recitations does not enter the pupil’s mouth, or the physician’s magical water does not enter the patient’s stomach, or the adorned face does not go to the mirror – and yet the results are obviously there-so also nothing from the past existence comes over to the present, nor does anything from the present pass over to the future; yet the aggregates, the sense-bases and the elements (*dhātus*) of the past existence have been the cause of the set of the present aggregates, sense-bases and elements which in turn do not pass over to the next existence, and yet are the cause for the fresh set of aggregates, sense-bases and elements in the next existence.

(Evameva atītabhavato imambhavam ito vā punabbhavam koci dhammopi na sankamati. na ca atītabhave khandhāyatanadhatu paccayoidha vā khandhāyatanadhātu paccayā punabbhave khandhāyatanadhātuyo na nibbattanti.) - Ibid.

How Resultants inexorably follow Volitional Actions.

“After the sense-door cognition, *Pañcadvārāvajjana*,* (whose function is to turn the consciousness to the object-here, let us say, a visual object-) has arisen and passed away, there arises eye-consciousness, *cakkhuviññāna*. Now, this eye-consciousness does not come from the sense-door-cognition, yet it occurs without fail. In just the same way, the thought-process occurs at rebirth. The *cuti citta*, decease-consciousness, that precedes *patisandhi citta* or rebirth-consciousness arises and vanishes. The rebirth—consciousness that comes after the decease-consciousness arises as of necessity. There is no barrier between the two thought-moments, i.e., the thought-process *cittavithi* is one uninterrupted flow of consciousness. Nothing whatever passes over from the decease-consciousness to the rebirth-consciousness. Yet rebirth-consciousness occurs as of *kammic* necessity or as a natural consequence of one’s own *kamma*.

(*Yatheva cakkhuviññanam manodhātu anantaram naceva āgatam nā pi na nibbattam anantaram. Tatheva patisandhimhi vattate cittasantati Purimam*

bhijjate cittam pacchimam jāyatetate. Tesam antarikā natthi vīci tesam na vijjati. Na cito gacchate kiñci patisandhi ca jāyati.)

- *VisuddhiMagga*, Vol., II

Supposing someone was to ask: if resultant (*vipaka*) follows volitional action (*Kamma*) is the *kamma* in the resultant? Or is the resultant in the *kamma*? To such a possible question the Commentator explains:

"*Kamma* is not in the resultant; nor is the resultant in the *kamma*. Each lacks the other. Yet resultant does not occur without the *kamma*."

(Kammam natthi vipakamhi pāko kamme na vijjati. Aññamaññam ubho suñña. Na ca kammam vinā phalam).

- *VisuddhiMagga*,

The Commentator gives these examples:-

"For example, there is no fire in the sun, and there is no fire in the magnifying glass; again, there is no fire in the dried cow-dung. There is no fire

* In *Abhidhamma* the two *sampaticchāna cittas* and *pañcadvārajjana citta* are sometimes referred to as *manodhātū* (mind-element). – *Nārada*: 'Manual of *Abhidhamma'*,

(Colombo, 1956).

outside those three too. Yet when the sun, (its rays), the magnifying glass and the dried cow-dung come together, the fire is produced.

(*Yathā na sūriye aggi. Na manimhi na gomaye. Na tesam bahi so atthi. Sambhāreti ca jāyati*). - Ibid.

"Similarly, resultant is not to be found in *kamma*, nor is it to be found outside *kamma*. The *kamma* is devoid of the resultant. The resultant is not there in the *kamma*. And yet, it is precisely on account of the *kamma*, from that *kamma*, that the resultant is produced."

(*Phalena suññam tam kammam. Phalam kamme na vijjati Kammanca kho upādāya tato nibbatte phalam*.) -Ibid.

There is no *Brahmā* or Creator that creates the world

but only causes and conditions that give rise to the five aggregates.

Apart from *Kamma* and Resultant (*vipāka*) there is no Creator such as *Brahmā*, *Vishnu* or *Deva*. This is described in the Commentary as follows:-

"In this *kamma-vipaka* law or the Law of Action and Reaction, there is no such thing as *Deva* or *Brahmā* who creates the world or the cyclic existences. What comes into existence is purely mind-and-matter and volitional actions, constituted by causes and conditions; not to be confused with being or person, or, in other words, a collection of reproductive causes and supportive conditions."

(*Na hettha devo brahmā vā samsārassatthikārako Suddhadhammā pavattanti hetu sambhāra paccayā*.)

- *VisuddhiMagga* II

How the World* is Perpetuated by *Kamma* and Resultants

The Commentator further illustrates the self-perpetuating nature of *kamma* and resultant acting and reacting on each other, thus negating the theory of creation:

"Owing to *kamma*, the five resultant *dhammas*, namely, consciousness (*viiññana*), mind-and-matter (*nāma-rūpa*), the six sense-bases (*salāyatāna*), Contact (*phassa*), Feeling (*vedanā*), come to pass. (In other words, in accordance with *kamma*, gross material of fine material, inferior station or superior station etc., take place. The resultant five aggregates are the cause of volitional action (*kamma*) at present. And due to *kamma* rebirth is occasioned. Thus the world goes on and on."

* 'The World': existence, rebirth, becoming; living things.

(*Kammā vipakā vattanti. Vipākokamma sambhavo*

Kammā punabbhavo hoti. Evamloko pavattati).

- *VisuddhiMagga*

"In this manner both *kamma* and resultant are reciprocating causes. Proceeding thus one from the other, it is impossible to trace which began first, like in the case of the seed-germ and the tree, and similar cases. And it is equally inconceivable when the process of action-reaction-action would end. Holders of wrong view, being unable to see the true significance of potential of kammic effect, are thus helplessly misdirected# in taking the world as a world of living beings or persons. In so doing they hold the conflicting views of eternalism and annihilationism (that a person lives only one life), proliferating to sixty-two kinds of erroneous views.

Whether in the present existence or in the past or in the future, there is no person or being who 'lives' or 'dies': only *kamma* and its appropriate resultants are taking place according to conditions that are self-generating well or reciprocating. When the true nature of existence is seen in its ultimate reality, the erroneous personality-view (*sakkāyaditthi*) melts away, the sixty-two kinds of blind views recede and the sixteen kinds of doubt are overcome.

If one does not abandon the concept of a self, one is bound to be adrift or drowning in *samsāra's* floods of craving which are only his own making. The Commentary says:

"Those under the grips of delusion or ignorance are bound to flounder in the currents of craving (like flotsam). Such ones being carried away by *samsaric* currents can never find escape from dukkha."

(*Ditthi bandhanabandhāte taṇhāsotena vuyhare Taṇhāsotena vuhyantā na te dukkhā pamuccare*).

- *VisuddhiMagga*

Granted, as the Commentator said, that *kamma* and resultants alone really exist, and not any person or being, in the world, there follows a natural question: who commits *kamma*? There is none: In as much as there is no 'doer' there is no 'sufferer' either. In the ultimate sense no persons does any act, nor suffer any act.

Only certain *dhammas*, or *dhamma** - more particularly, craving and clinging – are the real ‘author’, as the Commentator explains:

“There is no person who does acts and no person either who suffers acts. It is purely the *dhamma* that are occurring, that is, the mental-and-material

“Helplessly misdirected”: *asayamvasī*, lit., ‘not being under one’s control’ Holders of erroneous views are overwhelmed by ignorance and craving in their thinking; so that they cannot think straight.

* ‘*Dhammā’*, plural of *dhamma*.

phenomena that rise (and fall) according to causes and consequences. Seeing things in this true light is called right understanding or correct view.”

(*Kammassakārako natthi, vipākassacavedako.*

Suddhadhammā pavattanti. Evetām sammadassanam.)

- *VisuddhiMagga*

That it is ‘purely *dhammā’* (and nothing else) that exist is declared in *Paticcasamuppāda*, Dependent Origination, thus:

“When there is clinging (consequent to craving in ignorance) i.e., clinging to the five aggregates as ‘I’, ‘Mine’, etc. Becoming or *kammabhava* occurs. When there is no clinging (due to extinction of craving through the Path-Knowledge), there is no Becoming.”

(*Upādāne sati bhavo hoti. Upādāne na sati bhavo na hotiti*.)

- *Samyutta Nikāya, Nidāna Vagga*, p. 307

It is in the nature of a worldling to commit volitional acts under the driving force of craving and ignorance that builds up clinging. Merit and demerit accrue according to good or bad deed, that result in fresh becoming. When craving is destroyed by the Path-Knowledge, a ‘streams-enterer’ does not commit volitional action that

produces future becoming. In due course he is able to totally break the cyclic suffering of rebirth.

Cause is spoken of as ‘doer’ and resultant as ‘sufferer’ by way of conventional usage only (*paññatti*).

Neither doer nor sufferer exists in truth and reality. When the commentary refers to an ‘author’ it is merely by way of conventional usage or *paññatti*) to render the abstract concrete):-

“That *bhikkhu* (who has attained to the Path-Knowledge) does not see a doer beyond the cause that carries its effect, and does not see a sufferer other than the arising of resultant from that cause. As a matter of fact, where there is a cause and the arising of resultant there from, the wise, by way of mere convention, speak of somebody who suffers that resultant. This process of cause-effect relationship (such as feeling caused by contact) is established as the Law of Dependent Origination or *Paticcasamuppaāda* by the Great Sage, the Buddha.”

> (*So neva kāranato karakam passati na vipākappavattito patisamvedakam kārane pana sati kārako iti vapākapavattiyā sati patisamvedakoti samaññāmatte-na panditā voharantīti paticcasamuppādoti patthapesi mahāmuni*.)

- *VisuddhiMagga*.

Here ends the chapter on the Law of Causality and the exposition of the Truth of the Origin of Suffering, the discernment of which endows one with purity through overcoming doubt (*kankhāvitarana visuddhi*)).

Benefit of Attaining Purity through Overcoming Doubt; Concluding Remarks.

When the *yogi* understands the causal process of rebirth, i.e., *cuti* and *patisandhi*, purity through overcoming or transcending doubt is attained. This means he is no more perplexed by the sixteen kinds of doubt (*kankhā*) and the eight kinds of doubt (*vicikicchā*). The great benefits of such attainment are mentioned in the Commentary thus:-

Comprehending the cause of mind-and-matter by way of this process of rebirth, in the various aspects of the related *dhammas* or phenomena, amounts to (mental) strength or insight. (For) such comprehension effectively dispels the sixteen kinds of doubts (*kankhā*)*. More than that, it dispels the eight kinds of doubt (*kankhā*), namely:

(1) doubt about the Buddha, (2) doubt about the *Dhamma*, (3) doubt about the *Sanghā*, (4) doubt about the training (*sekkhā*), (5) doubt about the past, (6) doubt about the future, (7) doubt about the past and the future, (8) doubt about the Law of Dependent Origination. Thus the sixty-two kinds of wrong view are destroyed or expelled. It comprehends the cause of rebirth, and contains it. The knowledge of conditionality (*paccaya*, *pariggāha ñāna*) dispels doubts concerning the past, the future and the present, and firmly establishes one in the purified state through such overcoming of doubt. Hence this insight is called 'purity through overcoming doubt (*kankhā-vitarana vissuddhi*).

(*Evam cuti patisandhivasena viditasabbhadhammapakārena namarupassa paccayapariggaham thāmagatam hoti. Solasavidhā kankhā sutthutaram pahīyati na kevalañca sa eva sattari kankhatiti ādinayappavattā atthavidhā pi kankhā pahīyati. Dvasatthi ditthigatāni vikhambhanti. Evam nāmarūpa paccayapariggahanena tīsu addhāsu kankham vitaritvāna thitam ñānam kankhāvītarana-visuddhīti veditabbam.*)
-*VisuddhiMagga*

* 'The sixteen kinds of doubt (*kankhā*)': Sixteen kinds of doubt (*kankhā*) arise from eternalist view of self (*sasata vāda*). It is a preoccupation with 'I' regarding the past, the future and the present in the following manner:-

Regarding the past:-

1. Did I exist in the past?
2. Did I not exist in the past?
3. Who was I in the past? (Of what caste?)
4. How did I come into being in the past? (Of what appearance?)
5. Having been of a certain caste in a previous birth, of what caste had I become?

Regarding the future:-

1. Will I exist in the future?
2. Will I not exist in the future?

Otherwise known as 'Firmly-footed in the *Dhamma*', etc.

The commentary adds that Knowledge of Conditionality (*paccayapariggahañāna*) also is referred to by various names:-

Paccayapariggaha ñ*āna* is also referred to as Knowledge firmly-footed in Cause (*dhammathiti ñāna*), Knowledge of seeing things in their ultimate reality (*yathābhūta ñāna*), or Knowledge of correct view (sammādassanañāna).”

(*Dhammathiti ñānampi yathabhuta ñānampi sammādassana ñānampi etasseva vacanam*). - Ibid.

Knowledge Discerning Conditionality makes

Stream-entry Within Reach.

One who has attained purity through overcoming doubt is well on the way to the Path-Knowledge, so he can be regarded as one who finds refuge under the Buddha’s Teaching (*Sāsanā*) as a Stream-winner, to say the least. The Commentary puts it as follows:-

“Further, one who has attained this knowledge and who is in the habit of insight-development has gained comfort and asylum under the Buddha’s teaching (*sāsanā*). He is headed for the fortunate rebirths only, being precluded (by his own *kamma*) from falling into disarray to the four miserable states (*apāya*). He is referred to as a ‘Lesser Stream-winner’, *Cūla sotāpanna*.”

(*Iminā pana ñānena samannāgato vipassako*

buddhasāsane laddhassāso laddhapatitho niyatagatiko

cūlasotāpanno nāma.) - Ibid.

3. Who will I be in the future (Of what caste?)
4. How will I come into being in the future? (Of what appearance?)
5. Coming into existence in the future, what will I become next?

Regarding the present:-

1. Do I exist?
2. Do I not exist?
3. Who am I? (Of what caste)
4. How have I come into being? (Of what appearance?)
5. From where (what form of existence) did I come?
6. Where shall I go from here?

- *Majjhima Nikāya, Mūlapannāsa, Sabbāsava Sutta*, (etc.).

One Within Reach of Stream-Entry is Secure.

Why a Lesser Stream-enterer is secure is explained by the Commentator in these terms:-

In the strict sense of the *Dhamma*, comfort under the Buddha's Teaching is Fruition of the Path-Knowledge (*ariya phala*), and asylum of refuge means attaining of the Path-Knowledge (*ariya magga*).

But here, even though a lesser Stream-winner has yet to attain the path, he is well-established in the practice leading to the Path, and so it can be said that such a practising virtuous one has gained comfort and asylum (under the Buddha's Teaching)."

(*Paramathato sāsane assāssonāma ariyaphalam. Patitthānāma ariyamaggo.*

Ayam pana anadhigata maggaphalo pi tadadhigama upāya patipattiyam thitattā laddhāssāso laddhapatitthoti vuccati.)

- *VisuddhiMagga Mahātikā* (Sub-commentary)

In other words, he is on the threshold of the Path.

(Here ends the Third Chapter on *Samudaya Saccā* explained in detail).

Chapter Four

On the Cessation of *Dukkha*

Nirodha (cessation) defined

"In this *nibbāna* where there is no arising, or in other words, through the non-arising nature of *nibbāna*, there is, or there exists, cessation by way of non-arising of *dukkha* (beginning with rebirth). That is why *nibbāna* is called the cessation of *dukkha*."

(*Ittha etena vā dukkhassa anuppādanirodho atthīti dukkha nirodho*).

- *Tīkākyaw*,

The meaning here is, *nibbāna* is blissful because all *dukkha* such as rebirth are not existent there; and there is no becoming and no dissolution. Further, *nibbāna* as object of thought enables the wise person to destroy craving that lies in his heart and thus puts an end to *dukkha*. In other words, cessation implies not only the end of *dukkha* but also, of its source.

The Truth of Cessation has been dealt with earlier in a brief way. However, with a view to further strengthening the argument, the development of the path-knowledge and the twin phenomena of *dukkha* and *sukha* (pain and peace) will be treated here in their relatedness.

The Twin Method of Contemplation

Two sets of twin (*yamaka*) contemplation – *dukkha*-*sukha* set and *dukkha saccā*-*nirodha saccā* set-will are described here.

In *Patisambhidā Magga* the Venerable *Sāriputta* has stated: "Arising means *dukkha*; non-arising is peace - *sukha*."

(*Uppādo dukkham anuppādo sukham*.)

"Arising of the five aggregates is subject to ageing and death, hence it is *dukkha*. Non-arising of the five aggregates is free from ageing and death, hence peaceful."

Thus it should briefly be noted.

Further, the same Noble One has said:

“*Dukkhā sankhārā sukho nirodho*.”

“Mind-and-matter or mental and physical phenomena being conditioned things are unstable, now arising, now vanishing: they are therefore vain, unsatisfactory - *dukkha*. The cessation of these conditioned phenomena, i.e., when they cease to arise, is blissful.”

In short, this body constituted of the five aggregates is the home of *dukkha*. When the conditioned phenomena that make up the five aggregates do not rise again and no trace of them is left after the last existence – i.e., at *parinabbāna* as an *arahat*, - it is Peace, *Nibbāna*.

In a nutshell:

The aggregates and the sense - bases

are the dwelling house of *dukkha*;

When the house is no more,

dukkha has nowhere to stay.

When there is birth,

Ageing and death must come;

With the cessation of birth,

Ageing and death cease.

Contemplating thus,

Nibbānic bliss becomes clear.

Distinguishing Between the Features of Conditioned

Things and Unconditioned Things

The Buddha taught the distinction between conditioned things and unconditioned things *vide Dhammasangani*, *Abhidhamma Pataka*:-

"All conditioned things, matter-and-mind, are marked by these features;- their arising is evident; their dissolution is evident; their state of flux other than the arising and dissolution is evident. Thus should it be noted."

(*Sankhatassa sankhatalakkhanāni uppado paññāyati.*

Vayo paññāyati thitassa aññatattham paññayati).

- *Anguttara Nikāya*, Vol. I.

"*Nibbāna* - the unconditioned *dhamma*, is marked by these features; no arising whatever is there; no dissolution is there; no state of flux other than arising and dissolution is there; Thus should it be noted."

Birthlessness (*ajāta*), non-becoming (*apavatta*), non-arising (*anuppāda*), unconditioned (*asankhata*), should, accordingly, be understood as *nibbāna*.

All conditioned phenomena that are born (*jāta*), that which come into being (*pavatta*), that arise (*uppāda*), that are conditioned (*sankhata*), should accordingly be understood as *dukkha*.

The Unconditioned *Nibbāna* Extolled by the Buddha.

"Whatever *dhammas* there are, *bhikkhus*, conditioned or unconditioned, of those *dhammas* the unconditioned, the passion-free (*virāga*) *Nibbāna* is paramount."

(*Yāvatā bhikkhave dhammā sankhatā vā asankhatā va virāgo tesam aggamakkhayati.*) - Ibid.

Nibbāna is the supreme *dhamma* because it is changeless, without the process of arising and vanishing, and also because its existence is not subject to the conditions of *kamma*, *citta*, temperature and nutriment (which all conditioned phenomena are subject to).

Taken in another sense, *Nibbāna* is the supreme *dhamma* among the nine supramundane *dhamma* too – i.e., with reference to the four Paths (*maggas*) and the four Fruitions (*phalas*) of the Noble Way.

Why is *nibbāna* passion free?

Because there is no trace of any aggregate, mental or physical, in *nibbāna* where passion (or any defilement) can take a foothold. Since there are no mental phenomena there is no volition and so there are no conditioning activities. (In fact *nibbāna* is completely devoid of activity. Hence it is called Tranquil - peace).

Why *Nibbāna* is said to be Unconditioned (*asankhata*)

Mahātīka explains the unconditional character of *nibbāna* thus:-

"Indeed, from the fact that there is in *nibbāna* nothing that is born or produced, so that there is no change by way of decay and dissolution, it is to be seen that *nibbāna* is unconditioned."

(*Nibbānam uppādādinanhi abhavena asankhati paññāyati*).

Why *Nibbāna* is called Cessation (*Nirodha*)

The cessation of *dukkha* through the extinction of the five aggregates is called *nirodha* which is the name and the nature of *nibbāna*.

By *nirodha* is meant non - arising (*anuppādo*) (*Nirodho hotiti anuppādo*). That means there is no arising again or rebirth of the five aggregates. The cessation of the process of a fresh existence coming into being is what is meant by cessation.

Ill (*dukkha*) and Happiness (*sukha*) Distinguished

"It should be known by the Path-Knowledge (*abīññā*) that whatever arises or comes into being is *dukkha* (fraught with ills), and that non-arising, non-becoming (*anuppādo*) is peace (*santi*)." (*Uppādo dukkhanti abhiññeyyam anuppādo sukhanti abiññeyyam*). - *PatisambhidāMagga*

In the practice of the *Dhamma*, the Path's function is accomplished only if the yogi inclines his mind to *Nibbāna*. *Nibbāna* being untouchable by the senses is very difficult to comprehend. Abstruse and sublte though *nibbāna* is, *Patisambhidā Magga* gives the verifiable fact of the unsatisfactoriness (*dukkha*) of birth

(manifested in existence) and the blissful nature of cessation of birth in the pithy but pointed statement - " *uppādo dukkham anuppādo sukkham*". This simple and vivid comparison of conditioned existence with the unconditioned bliss is worth contemplating for insight - development.

The method of contemplation is as follows:-

Set the mind fixedly on the fact –

"that materiality-mentality phenomena,

being conditioned and unstable, are *dukkha*;

the cessation of all these conditioned phenomena

is real peace". - (*dukkhā sankhārā sukho nirodho ti*).

By constant awareness of this pointed fact, one will become inclined towards *nibbāna* and become desirous of attaining to that blissfulness. This state of consciousness is the Path - consciousness. It rejects craving. And with the rejection of craving, Stream-entry is attained to.

This is how the Path-knowledge may be meditated upon.

Comprehending the Four Noble Truths and *Nibbāna* by the Law of Dependent Origination.

There are forty - four subjects for development of insight# throught meditation, by the method of Dependent Origination as follows: -

1. Ageing and death: (*jarā marana*):

  (a) Knowledge (of the Path) that ageing and death are truly painful (*dukkha saccā* in ageing and death);

  (b) Knowledge that birth (*jāti*) is the origin or cause of ageing and death (*samudaya saccā* in ageing and death);

  (c) Knowledge of cessation of ageing and death (*nirodha saccā* in ageing and death);

  (d) Knowledge about the practice leading to the cessation of ageing and death (*magga saccā* in ageing and death).

In these four ways should ageing and death be meditated upon? (*Jarāmarane ñānam, jarāmarana samudaye ñānam jarāmarana norodhe ñānam jarāmarana nirodhagāminiya patipadāya ñānanti*).

2. Birth (*jāti*)

Bcoming (*kamma bhava*)* that leads to production of existence (*upapatti bhava*) ** is the origin of birth (*jati*). Birth (*jati*) is *dukkha* because it is caused by becoming. Cessation of becoming and birth is the cessation of *dukkha*; the practice leading to their cessation is the path.

'Forty - four subjects': ñ*ānavatthu*

* '*Kamma-bhava'*: The process or becoming; the potential force of one's volitions or *sankhāra* in the previous existences that conditions the future existence.

** '*Upapatti* - *bhava'*: renewed appearance of the *khandhā* aggregates in one of the planes of existence, the resulting aspect of the process of becoming.

3. Becoming (*bhava*):

Clinging (to sense-pleasures, to wrong belief, to rites and ceremonies*, to a tenacious belief in self) is the origin of Becoming (*bhava*). Renewed existence is *dukkha* because it results from clinging. Cessation of clinging and becoming is the cessation of *dukkha*. The practice leading to their cessation (such as Right Understanding) is the Path.

4. Clinging (*upadāna*):

Craving (*taṇhā*) is the origin of clinging. Clinging is *dukkha*. Cessation of craving and clinging is cessation of *dukkha*. The practice leading to their cessation is the path.

5. Craving (*taṇhā*):

Feeling (*vedanā*) is the origin of craving. Craving is *dukkha* because it springs from Feeling. Cessation of Feeling and craving is cessation of *dukkha*. The practice leading to their cessation is the Path.

6. Contact (*phassa*):

Contact is the origin of Feeling. Feeling is *dukkha* because it is conditioned by Contact. Cessation of Contact and Feeling is a cessation of *dukkha*. The practice leading to their cessation is the path.

7. Sense - bases (*āyatana*)

The sense - bases are the origin of Contact. Contact is *dukkha*. Cessation of sense - bases and contact is the cessation of *dukkha*. The practice leading to their cessation is the path.

8. Mind - and - matter (*nāma-rūpa*):

Mind - and - matter is the origin of sense - bases. Sense-bases are *dukkha*. Cessation of mind-and-matter and sense - bases is cessation of *dukkha*. The practice leading to their cessation is the path.

9. Consciousness (*viññāna*)

Consciousness is the origin of mind - and - matter. Mind-and-matter is *dukkha*. Cessation of consciousness and mind - mater complex is cessation of *dukkha*. The practice leading to their cessation is the path.

10. Volitional activities (*sankhāra*)

Volitional activities, moral, immoral and unshakable (*ānenjābhi sankhārā*) volitions that send one to the fortunate existences:, the unfortunate existences and the Formless spheres, respectively – are the origin of Consciousness. Consciousness is *dukkha*. Cessation of volitional activities and consciousness is cessation of *dukkha*. The practice leading to their cessation is the path.

11. Ignorance (*avijjā*):

Ignorance of the Four Truths is the origin of volitional activities. Volitional activities, being caused by ignorance, are *dukkha*. Cessation of

* The Pali term *Sīlabbataparāmāsa* covers all forms of conduct, virtuous or otherwise, that are erroneously believed to purify one from defilements, and blindly adhered to.

ignorance and volitional activities is cessation of *dukkha*. The practice leading to their cessation is the path.

When the Four Noble Truths are comprehended, the blind ignorance that has deluded the worldling vanishes. When ignorance is destroyed (through the Path - Knowledge), volitional activities, consciousness, mind-and-matter, sense-bases,

contact, feeling, clinging, becoming, birth, ageing and death all cease. This cessation is *nibbāna*:

It is a cause–effect cycle: when the cause is removed, no effect is forthcoming. There is no being or person that lives, dies, and is reborn or re-incarnated. Only a continuous stream of mind-matter complex is taking place conditioned by the chain of causes as stated above. This is how wrong views about life-holding self as eternal, or self as only the present life–may be discarded. This is how *nibbāna* is to be understood.

The Four Truths in respect of each factor of dependent origination makes forty-four subjects for insight–meditation.

Meditating on the Seventy–seven subjects for

Insight-Knowledge per *Patisambhidāmagga*.

1. Having birth as cause, ageing and death result;

2. Where there is no birth there is no ageing and death.
3. In the past also, having birth as cause, ageing and death had resulted;
4. If there had been no birth, no ageing and death would have taken place.

5. In the future too, having birth as cause, ageing and death are going to take place;

6. If there's going to be no birth, no ageing and death will take place.

7. That knowledge of causation or dependent origination of the noble disciple is Knowledge that stands firm in the *Dhamma* (*dhamma thiti ñāna*). That knowledge itself is subject to decay, death and cessation.

(*Jātiyā sati jarāmaranam hoti. Jātiyā asati jarāmaranam na hoti. Anāgatampi addhānāmjatiyā sati jārāmaranam hoti. Jātiyā asati jārānaranam na hoti. Yampissa tam dhammatthitiñānam. Tampi khaya `dhammam vayadhammam nirodhadhammanti*).

- *Samyutta Nikāya, Nidāna Vagga* (p. 291).

Thus the Causal Law is meditated upon in regard to the present, the past and the future in its positive and negative effects. The six modes of contemplation then have an added aspect as to the insight-Knowledge under review, thereby, obtaining seven modes on Birth.

Birth mediated upon in the seven ways will lead to seven kinds or aspects of insight which focuses the mind on the Law of Causation. This consciousness dispels illusions of a self and self-belief or ego will disappear; doubts will clear, and the Path-Knowledge will be attained to.

1. With the remaining factors in the chain of causation too, this sevenfold meditation should be applied:
2. In the past, the present and the future, becoming as cause, birth occurs. When there is no becoming, no birth can occur.
3. In the past, the present and the future, clinging as cause, becoming occurs. When there is no clinging, no becoming can occur.
4. In the past, the present and the future, craving as cause, clinging occur. When there is no craving, no clinging can occur.
5. In the past, the present and the future, feeling as cause, craving occurs. When there is no feeling, no craving occurs.
6. In the past, the present and the future, contact as cause, feeling occurs. When there is no contact, no feeling occurs.
7. In the past, the present and the future, sense-bases as cause, contact occurs. When there are no sense-bases, no contact occurs.
8. In the past, the present and the future, mind-and-matter as cause, sense-bases occur. When there is no mind-and-matter, no sense-bases occur.
9. In the past, the present and the future, consciousness as cause, mind-and-matter occurs or arises. When there is no consciousness, no mind-and-matter occurs or arises.
10. In the past, the present and the future, volitional activities-moral, immoral or unshakable, -as cause, rebirth consciousness occurs. When there is no volitional activity, no rebirth consciousness occurs.
11. In the past, the present and the future, ignorance of the Truth as cause, volitional activities occur. When there is no ignorance of the Truth prevailing, no volitional activities occur.

Meditating in Backward Order (of the Law of Dependent Origination)

(1) When ignorance ceases, volitional activities cease. (2) When volition-al activities cease, consciousness ceases. (3) When consciousness ceases mind-and-matter ceases.

(4) When mind-and-matter ceases sense-bases cease. (5) When sense-bases cease contact ceases. (6) When contact ceases feeling ceases. (7) When feeling ceases craving ceases. (8) When craving ceases clinging ceases. (9) When clinging ceases becoming ceases. (10) When becoming ceases birth (rebirth) ceases. (11) When birth ceases ageing and death cease-the deathless (*amata*) or *Nibbāna* is attained.

(As in the backward order shown above),

by contemplating in seven ways for each of the eleven factors

we have seventy–seven modes of meditation again.

The Origin and Cessation of the World of Conditioned Existence

The Buddha taught the Law of Dependent Origination beginning with sense-bases (*āyatana*) that are the cause of Contact, etc.

"And how, *Bhikkhus*, is the world (*loka*)* originated? (Or, how is the world set going?) Dependent on eye and visual object, there arises eye-consciousness (*cakkhu viññāna*). The coming together of the three things; i.e., eye, visual object and eye–consciousness, result in contact (*phassa*). Dependent on contact, feeling (*vedanā*) – pleasant feeling, unpleasant feeling or neutral feeling- arises. Dependent on feeling, craving or attachment (*taṇhā*) arises. Dependent on craving (i.e., craving for a pleasant feeling in the case of unpleas-ent feeling having arisen), clinging or grasping (*upādāna*) arises. Depending on clinging (i.e., a tenacious clinging to a false ego or a vague self as 'I' or 'my self' in regard to the five aggregates, like the cat seizing his prey), becoming (*kamma bhava*) arises. Dependent on becoming (i.e., volitional actions or *kamma* that may be moral, immoral, that have the potential for rebirth in one of the nine categories of existence,** birth (*jāti*) arises. Depending on birth, (i.e., birth, in accordance with one's own *kamma*, in one of the five destinies or *gati**** (lit., 'goings') or in one of the four types of birth or *yoni*# (lit., 'womb'), ageing, disease, death, grief, lamentation, pain, sorrow and anguish, arise. (In this way the cause of origin of the sheer woeful chain of ills, *dukkha*, takes place). This, *Bhikkhus*, is how the world is originated (or, how worldling is set going).

"Katamo ca bhikkhave lokassa samudayo cakkhum ca paticca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññānam tiṇṇam sangati phasso. Phassa paccayā vedanā, vedanā paccayā taṇhā, taṇhā paccayā upādāna, upādāna paccayā bhavo, bhava paccayā jāti, jāti paccayā jarāmarana soka parideva dukkha domamassupāyāsā sambhavanti. (Evametassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa samudayo hoti). Ayam vuccati bhikkhave, lokassa samudayo".

-Salāyatana Vagga, Samyutta Nikāya

* 'The world (*loka*)': conditioned existence of the aggregates of mind and matter or sankhāra loka.

** 'Nine categories of existence': The Three spheres of existence compris- ing thirty-one planes in the *Abhidhamma* method of teaching are categorized into nine division of existence (*bhavo*) based on *kamma* and its resultants, viz: *kāma bhava*, *rūpa bhava, arūpa bhava, saññī bhava, asaññī bhava, nevasaññī nasaññī bhava*, *ekavokara bhava*, *catuvokāra bhava*, *pañcavokāra bhava*.

*** 'The five destines or *gati'*: (1) *nirayagati*, the eight hellish states of retribu–tion, (2) *petagati*, the hungry beings, (3) *tiricchāna* gati, the animal world, (4) *manussa gati*, humans, (5) *devagati*, divine beings in the celestial world.

'The four types of birth or yoni': (1) *jalābhuja*, birth in a mother's womb beginning with infinitesimal liquid, (2) *sansedaja*, birth from moisturous substances beginning with form, (3) *andaja*, born in an egg, (4) *opapātika*, born as sudden appearance in fully developed form (such as in *nirayagati* and *devagati*)

This is how *dukkha* ensues from specific cause. The same causal chain should be understood in respect of the remaining five sense- base of ear, nose, tongue, body–sensitivity and mind.

When cause ceases, no resultant ensues

When cause ceases no *dukkha* ensues and *nibbāna*, the cessation of *dukkha*, is attained. To quote *Salāyatana Vagga*, *Samyutta Nikāya*, again:

"And how, *Bikkhus*, does the world (i.e., the aggregates and the sense-bases that are subject to constant decay, either here or hereafter, endlessly), come to a close (*atthangamo*)* ? Dependent on eye and visual object, eye-consciousness arise. The three things–eye, visual object and eye-consciousness–conjointly result in contact. Dependent on contact, feeling arises. Dependent on feeling, craving arises. Through the total eradication of that craving, through complete detachment, (i.e., contemplating on feeling – as and when it arises – in its ephemeral nature just like bubbles) the Path-Knowledge of the *arahatta magga*, the fourth and final level of enlightenment, clinging ceases – i.e., the cling to an illusory and erroneous self disappears.

When clinging ceases, becoming (i.e., *kamma bhava*, the active aspect of becoming, and *upapatti bhava*, the passive aspect of becoming), ceases. When

becoming ceases, birth ceases. When birth ceases, ageing and death, grief, lamentation, pain, sorrow and anguish cease. In this way the whole train of sheer woefulness, *dukkha*, ceases. This, *Bhikkhus*, is how the world of sentient beings comes to a close, that is, the causal chain is broken, and *nibbāna* realized. This is how Existence is ended.

(*Katamo ca bhikkhave lokassa atthangamo cakkhum ca paticca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññānam tiṇṇam sangati phasso, phassa paccayā vedenā vedanā paccayā taṇhā, tassāyeva taṇhāya asesa virāga nirodho. Upādananirodhā, bhavanirodho, bhava nirodhā jāti nirodho, jātinirodhā jarāmarāna soka parideva dukkha domanassupāyāsā nirujjhanti. Evametassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa norodho hoti. Ayam vuccati bhikkhave lokassa atthangamo*.)

Penetrating the Four Noble Truths through the fifty kinds of

knowledge about the arising and passing away of phenomena.

Knowledge in comprehending the rise and fall** of mental and physical phenomena is technically termed *udayabbaya ñāna* in the practice for the Path. It consists of 10 momentary instances of the actual flux that take place,

* '*Atthangamo'*: setting (of the sun), disappearance.

** 'rise and fall': *udaya*, arising; *vaya* dissolution

khana udayavaya, and 40 causes that are responsible for those occurrences, *paccaya udayavaya*. They are explained below.

Watching closely the rise and fall of mental and physical phenomena, one gains insight into the instability or corruptibility of all conditioned things. This insight is knowledge in comprehending the rise and fall of phenomena or *udayabbayañāna*.

(*paccuppannānam dhammānam viparināmānupassane paññā udayābbayanupassane ñānam*.) -*VisuddhiMagga*

This process of rising and falling may be observed, for instance, in the feeling that arises at this moment, or in-breath and out-breath (the element of motion (*vayo*) caused by (lit., 'born of'), mind, that brushes against the nostrils, which, when noticed closely, leads to insight into the change – rising and falling continuously. Or, listening to the harp, the sound produced earlier is constantly replaced by the sound that comes after it. All replacements, of course, imply decay of the older order of things. In fact all conditioned things, including the mind-and-matter that the body is composed of, have been under constant flux since existences beyond reckoning in the timeless round of rebirths. As such, there is none to cling to as one's person or one's self. It is, after all, a stream of mental and physical phenomena in a constant state of flux, giving an illusion of a living entity, due to the rapidity of change, (*santati nimitta*).

The method lies in contemplating the rise and fall of each of the five aggregates, their causes and their cessation and, thence the end of *dukkha* which is *nibbāna*. It runs as follows:

"Due to ignorance or delusion, materiality (*rūpa*) is caused to arise; due to craving, materiality is caused to arise; due to kamma, materiality is caused to arise; due to nutriment, materiality is caused to arise. The phenomenon or nature of such arising or birth of that materiality is called 'rising', *udaya."*

> (*Avijjā samudayā rūpa samudayo, taṇhā samudayā rūpa samudayo, kamma samudayā rūpa samudayo, āhāra samudayā rūpa samudato, tassa nibbattilakkhanam udayo*.) - *Patisambhidā Magga*.

Thus we have the four causal factors

that produce materiality together with the fact

of such production, comprising a set of five *dhammas*

for contemplation in regard to materiality, *rūpa*.

(Next we have):

"Due to cessation or lifting of ignorance, materiality ceases, i.e., it does not reappear after it ceases (at *cuti*); due to cessation of craving, materiality ceases; due to cessation of *kamma*, materiality ceases; due to cessation of nutriment, materiality

ceases. The nature of that materiality undergoing change is called 'fall', death or decay, *vyayo*.

> (*Avijjā nirodhā rūpa nirodho, taṇhā nirodhā rupa nirodho, kamma niro dhā, rupa nirodho, āhāra nirodhā, rupa nirodho. Tassa viparināma lakkhanam vyayo*). - *Patisāmbhidā Magga*

The cessation here is *nibbāna* with no trace of the aggregates remaining (*anupādisesa nibbāna*). Thus we have the four factors that bring cessation of materiality together with the fact of such cessation, comprising a set of five *dhammas*.

And so we have a set of ten *dhammas* in regard to materiality – five on the rising aspect and five on the falling or perishing aspect, comprehending of which leads to *udayavyaya ñāna* or Knowledge regarding birth and death (in the ultimate sense – i.e., not in the mundane usage referring to the biological birth and death conventionally known to any worldling).

With the remaining four aggregates – *vedanā* (feeling), *saññā*, (perception), *sankhārā* (mental formations and *viññāna*, consciousness), a similar set of ten *dhammas* for meditation leading to ten Knowledge for each are obtained.

> (*Avijjā samudayā vedanā samudayo* . . . etc.*;*
>
> *Avijjā nirodhā vedanā nirodho* . . . etc.)

The words *saññā* and *sankhārā* are to be substituted for *rūpa* in the full statements above.

With respect to *viññāna* there is a small difference in the statement of the same formula: –

> (*Avijjā samudayā viññāna samudayo taṇhā*
>
> *samudayā viññāna samudayo kamma samudayā*
>
> *viññāna samudayo nāma rūpa samudayā viññāna*
>
> *samudayo tassa nibbattilakkhanam udayo*.)

> (*Avijjā nirodhā viññāna nirodho taṇhā nirodhā*
>
> *viññāna nirodho kamma nirodhā viññāna*

niridho nāma rūpa nirodhā viññāna nirodha

tassa viparināmalakkhanam vyayo.)

(N.B.: In the above two paragraphs the word *āhāra* of the previous statement is replaced by *nāma rūpa*.) - Ibid.

The ten Knowledge for each of the five aggregates give fifty Knowledge regarding birth and death. Contemplating on those fifty aspects, the five aggregates will come to be seen as *dukkha* in truth; the causative factors such as ignorance, craving, *kamma*, etc., are the truth of the origin of *dukkha*. (*samudaya saccā*); the cessation of ignorance, craving, etc., that bring cessation of *dukkha* is *nirodha saccā*; the practice with a view to cessation is the path in truth (*magga saccā*). The causative law will become evident and the reality of *nibbāna* will be perceived.

Sense–bases as sources of *dukkha* –

and cessation of *dukkha* through them.

Being attached to eye, ear, etc., the six sense-bases, is simply being enamored of *dukkha*. The Buddha said:

"*Bhikkhus*, he who takes delight in eye, in the mistaken concept of 'my eye', 'the eye is (part of) me or myself', and is very attached to it, is taking delight in *dukkha*. In doing so (i.e., taking delight in *dukkha)*, gets no escape from *dukkha*. This I say."

(*Yo bhikkhave cakkhum abhinandati dukkham*

so abhinandati. Yo dukkham abhinandati aparimutto so

dukkhasmāti vadami.) *– Samyutta Nikāya, Salāyatana Vagga.*

In this statement eye is *dukkha* in truth. Attachment to eye is the origin of *dukkha*. Thus should the two truths be known.

In regard to the remaining five sense-bases – ear, nose, tongue, body (body sensitivity) and mind – the two truths should be understood in the same way.

(The Buddha then said):

"*Bhikkhus*, he who does not take delight in eye, knowing well that it is not his own, not his self, that it is impermanent, that it is fraught with ill, and is corruptible, has the right understanding; he is not attached to it. Being detached, he is not enamored of *dukkha*. Thus disenchanted with *dukkha*, he escapes from it. This I say."

(*Yo bhikkhave cakkhum na abhinandati dukkham so na abhinandati.*

Yo dukkham na abhinandati parimutto so dukkhasmāti vadāmi.) – Ibid.

The same should be understood in regard to ear, nose, tongue, body and mind as well. Herein, eye is *dukkha* in truth. Abandoning attachment to eye is the practice of the path. Escape from *dukkha* through such abandoning is the cessation of *dukkha*, which is *nibbāna*. In the foregoing statement we have had two Noble Truths (of understanding the fact of *dukkha* and the cause of *dukkha*), so we have the Four Noble Truths accomplished by contemplating as per these two statements, which establishes the *yogi* in the Path–Knowledge.

Craving, Wrong View and Clinging are the fuel that

keep the flame of existence alive.

The Buddha has taught us to abandon craving, wrong view and clinging as the necessary condition to free ourselves from *dukkha* on the simile of a fire, *vide Samyutta Nikāya*, *Nidāna Vagga*; –

The Buddha asked the *bhikkhus*, "Let's say there is a big fire alighted on purpose. What would you do to keep the fire alive?"

"Venerable Sir, we would feed it constantly with fire-wood so that the fire is kept burning."

"Very good, *bhikkhus*, very good."

"How, then, *Bhikkhus*, would you do to make the fire go out?"

"Venerable Sir, we would stop feeding it with fuel."

“Very good, *Bhikkhus*, very good. Just like the feeding of firewood to keep the fire alive and burning, Craving is kept alive and burning through relishing the five aggregates, with the six internal sense-bases and the six external sense objects that are being clung to in ignorance.”

(*Evam eva upādāyesu dhammesu assādānupassino taṇhā pavuddhati.*)

- *Nidāna Vagga.*

It may be noted (again here) that the five aggregates and the sense-bases are *dukkha* in truth; relishing them as if they were pleasant is the origin of *dukkha*. In this dialogue above we are given to understand the two Truths of *Dukkha saccā* and *dukkha samudaya saccā*.

The Buddha continues with the extinguishing of the fire of craving thus:

“Through persistently viewing the five aggregates and the sense-bases that are objects of clinging in gross ignorance, as being dangerous things that are corruptible, as truly impermanent (*anicca*), woeful (*dukkha*) and unreal or unsubstantial (*anatta*), one gains Right Understanding; and as a result, craving ceases.”(*Upādāyesu dhammesu ādhinavanupassino taṇhā nirujjhati.*) - Ibid.

Herein it should be noted that the aggregates and sense-bases are *dukkha* in truth. Abandoning attachment to them is the Path; cessation of craving is *nibbāna* – cessation of *dukkha* in truth.

For ready remembrance we have:

“Through Craving, *dukkha* arises;

Abandon Craving, and *dukkha* ceases.”

This terse statement carries vast import and so is worth memorizing and meditating on for development of insight.

“All that has arisen from cause –

These aggregates, sense–bases, etc., -

Are impermanent (*anicca*), unsatisfactory and

painful (*dukkha*), unreal (*anatta*).

Or, ‘birth entails ageing, decay and death.’

Contemplate hard on these truths,

And craving falls away.

Satisfaction in cessation is accomplishment

of the Path.”

The aggregates and sense–bases are conditioned things that are caused to arise and that in turn cause fresh arising. Hence they are *dukkha* in truth. They arise just because they are held in fond attachment (*taṇhā*). When craving for them is expelled from one’s heart they do not raise again; birth ceases. That means the cessation of all woes that birth brings in its train. Being satisfied with such cessation is the true test of *nibbāna*.

***Nibbāna* is a complete departure from lustful thoughts,**

so is conducive to cessation of craving and passions.

Having described the various ways for attainment of cessation, the full significance of the term *nirodha* or cessation will be given here: –

“That which is a complete departure (*nikkhanto*)

from craving (*taṇhā*), harbinger of rebirth, and

which also goes by the name of *nibbāna*.” (Or,

departure from lustful thoughts, etc.)

(*Vānasankhatāya taṇhāya nikkhantanti nibbānam*.)

Why is *nibbāna* conducive to escape from craving?

How is it a departure from lustful thoughts?

Because the wise person, having gained Right Understanding, sees the real nature of all conditioned phenomena – aggregates, sense-bases, etc., - as being impermanent, unsatisfactory and empty, discerns the *dukkha*–free nature of *nibbāna* due to a complete absence of the *khandhās*. Hence he understands the hazards surrounding the *khandhās* and loathes them; fights shy of them, and are inclined towards the peaceful cessation of *nibbāna*. This is how *nibbāna* is devoid of, and a departure from, craving. Further, it is in the very nature of craving to be inclined to

conditioned things; it turns its back to *nibbāna*. Therefore *nibbāna* is the very antithesis of craving.

"Indeed, in the ultimate sense *nibbāna* is to be called the noble truth realized by the *ariyās* (Noble One) that it is the cessation of *dukkha*, (*dukkha nirodha*)."

(Herein *dukkha nirodha* means the unconditioned, birth-less, non-arising, non-becoming *nibbāna*.)

"That truly is so. Since as a result of that cessation or *nibbāna* as the object of thought (i.e., by the Path–consciousness) craving comes to be disgusted and destroyed, *nibbāna* may (also) be called the absence of passion (*virāgo*)."

> (*Paramatthato hi dukkha nirodham ariyasaccanti*
>
> *nibbānam vuccati. Yasmā pana tam āgamma*
>
> *taṇhā virajjati ceva nirujjhati ca tasmā*
>
> *virāgoti ca nirodhoti ca vuccati*.)

- *VisuddhiMagga*

Nibbāna Is Worthy Of Bearing In Mind Perpetually.

The commentator has extolled *nibbāna* in these terms: –

"Now, in this unconditioned *nibbāna*, the wise have found the worthy *dhamma* that leads them to perfect peace and so is worthy of bearing in mind perpetually."

(*Asankhate pana attano cittena upanayanam arahatīti opāneyyiko*.)

- *VisuddhiMagga*

(End of the Chapter on *Nirodha Saccā*)

Chapter Five

On the Path

The Noble Truth of the Way to the cessation of *dukkha* is constituted of the eight factors, namely: Right Understanding (*sammā ditthi*), Right Thoughts (*sammā sankappa*), Right Speech (*sammā vācā*), Right Action (*sammā kammanta*), Right Livelihood (*sammā ājiva*), Right Endeavour (*sammā vāyāma*), Right Mindfulness (*sammā sati*), and Right Concentration (*sammā samādhi*).

By Right Understanding is meant understanding the Four Noble Truths. By Right Thoughts is meant thinking about release from the round of rebirths. By Right Speech is meant abstinence from the four kinds of verbal misconduct. By Right Action is meant abstinence from the three kinds of bodily misconduct. By Livelihood is meant an honest living (free from the three kinds of bodily misconduct and the four kinds of verbal misconduct). By Right Endeavour is meant putting earnest efforts (for attaining *Nibbāna*). By Right Mindfulness is meant keeping the mind alert (in respect of every act, verbal, bodily or mental). By Right Concentration is meant a one-pointedness or steadfastness of the mind (on a given object of meditation).

The Characteristic, etc., of the Noble Truth of Path (*Magga sacca*)

The Commentary elaborates the Noble Truth of Path as follows:-

The Path in truth (*Magga saccā*) has the character of extricating (the worldling) from the round of rebirths; its function is to eradicate the defilements; it is manifested as emerging or getting released from the round of rebirths.

> (*Niyyānalakkhanam magga saccam kilesappahānarasam vutthana paccu patthānam*).

The Path, in essence, is the practice to end rebirth.

To elucidate this statement:

Whenever there is birth, decay and death oppress one who has come into being. When there is no rebirth, the ills of ageing and death, etc., do not arise. This is

freedom from the *dukkha* that birth entails. This is *nibbāna*, perfect happiness. That is why the Path, in essence, is the practice to end rebirth. This practice necessitates the eradication of craving for existence. To eradicate craving for existence the yogi should meditate on the twelve ills that result from that craving, viz:-that is *dukkha*, ageing is *dukkha*, disease is *dukkha,* death is *dukkha*, grief, lamentation, (physical) pain, sorrow, anguish are *dukkha*, to be associated with the undesirable is *dukkha*, to be separated from the loved things is *dukkha*, not getting what one wants is *dukkha*; in brief, the five aggregates of clinging are *dukkha*.

Through constant contemplation the truth of *dukkha* will dawn on the meditator. He will get wearied of existence and will have no craving for it. Remember the man who took a she - demon as wife, not knowing her true self, and forsook her the moment he discovered her as his enemy. When the desire to have continued existence dies out, no rebirth occurs. The flame is alight only when the candle lasts: when the candle is exhausted the flame goes out. For the flame is dependent on the candle only. When rebirth does not occur, the end of *dukkha* is realized, which is *anupādisesa nibbāna* - *nibbāna* without the aggregates remaining.

N.B.:– In describing *samudaya saccā*, sometimes craving alone is mentioned; sometimes the whole set of ignorance, craving, clinging and *kamma* is mentioned. Both are valid under the text and in accordance with commentaries.

Contemplating on the aggregates according to the

Path per *Dhammacakka Pavattana Sutta.*

Another way of contemplating for the Path-knowledge;

1. According to *Dammacakka Pavattana Sutta*, the yogi contemplates on the impermanence (*anicca*) through ageing and death, unsatisfactoriness (*dukkha*) and impersonality (*anatta*) of each and every part of the body - hair, body hair, eye, ear, nose, limbs, and organs - to realize the truth of *dukkha*. This is contemplating on the body as one’s (internal) object.

2. Contemplating on the truth that craving has been responsible for all the *dukkha* of this existence, is contemplating on the origin of *dukkha* with reference to one’s body.

3. Contemplating on the truth that the cessation of rebirth is just at hand if only one could cut off craving through the Path-knowledge.

4. Contemplating on the truth that the kind of right understanding of *dukkha* and the other constituent factors for Path-Knowledge is the only correct way to attain cessation of *dukkha*.

Contemplating in the above ways, the yogi comes to perceive things as they really are, i.e., without being deluded by conceptual images or ideas, and the truth is realized, the necessary insight gained. He enters the stream of the Path-Knowledge and attains *sotāpatti magga*.

This is according to the *sutta* method. Do not be misled into thinking that *Dhammacakka* (being highly abstruse), one could gain insight only when the *Abhidhamma* method is employed as one's object of meditation. The Four Noble Truths may be realized by either method.

Discriminating between what is the Path and what is not;

between what is to be rejected and what to be developed.

That view is not the Path-knowledge which holds the five aggregates and the sense-bases as being permanent, pleasant and one's own, and entertains a vain sense of self, which is mere corrupted view deluded by ignorance and blinded by craving. This view arises through perverted thinking, perverted concepts.

That view is the Path-Knowledge which takes due heed of the dangers that surround the aggregates, the sense-bases, etc., in the realization of the ultimate truth that all conditioned *dhammas* are impermanent, unsatisfactory and not-self, that the body is loathsome and lacks any compellingly real substance.

Again:

That person is not on the Path so long as he does not understand the endless cycle of rebirths as painful; does not understand that the cessation of rebirth is the bliss of the unborn, the non-becoming, non-arising, the unconditioned *nibbāna*. He remains a deluded person shrouded by ignorance. He does not entertain right understanding and uphold the remaining right conduct that constitutes the Eightfold Noble Path.

He is on the Path who understands rightly that existence of all forms is *dukkha* in the ultimate reality, for this is Right Understanding. There is no *dukkha* as great as the aggregates of existence (*Natthi khandhasmā dukkha*). Then he knows that the unconditioned reality of non-arising, being free from the process of decay and death, is true happiness, peace in the ultimate-*nibbāna*. (*Natthi santismam sukham*). Knowing this profound truth, the yogi strives for the highest fruition of the Path-Knowledge and in due course attains the Birthlessness (*ajāta*).

The Nine Supra-mundane (*lokuttara*) *Dhammas*: – *sotāpatti magga ñāna*, Knowledge of stream-entry; *sotāpatti phala ñāna*, Fruition of stream-entry; *sakadāgāmi magga ñāna*, Knowledge of the Once-returned, *sakadāgāmi phala* ñ*āna*, Fruition of the once-returner; *anāgāmi magga ñāna*, Knowledge of the Non-returner, *anāgāmi phala ñāna*, Fruition of the Non-returner, *arahatta magga ñāna*, Knowledge of the *Arahat*, *arahatta phala ñāna*, Fruition of the *arahatship*; and *nibbāna*. *Magga ñāna* means the comprehending of the Four Truths. *Phala-ñāna* means the establishment in the knowledge of the four truths. *Nibbāna* mean, the birthless, the non-becoming, the non-arising and the uncon- ditioned *dhamma*.

The Meaning of *Lokuttara* or the Supra-mundane

"It transcends the mundane world; hence it is called the supra-mundane."

(*Lokato uttaratīti lokuttaram*).

The Difference in Practicing for Stream - entry and

For the Three Higher Path-Knowledge

The Path-Knowledge is attained through purging (*pahātabba*) of impurities (*kilesa*) of the mind. The Buddha mentioned three types or modes of purging:

Dassanena pahātabbā dhammā,

Bhāvanāyapahātabbā dhamma,

Neva dassanena na bhāvanāya pahātabbā dhammā.

(See *Dhammasanganī, Abhidhamma Pitaka. Tikamātikā, Dassana tika*).

Of those three types, Stream-entry is attained through abandoning wrong view (*ditthi*) and doubt (*vicikicchā*) which in effect means discerning the fact of *dukkha*.

When existence is seen in its reality (as mere *dukkha*), the Noble Truths are understood. That is why one aspiring to *sotāpatti magga* or 'Stream-entry' must first acquaint oneself with the learning aspect of the Four Noble Truths under some wise person. Having learnt it properly one should then meditate persistently on the truth. Then the knowledge gathered by learning will become direct, experienced knowledge, or insight-knowledge, penetrative and profound. (*pativedha*). On gaining this penetrative knowledge of the Four Truths, the business of purging (wrong view and doubt) through comprehension (*dassana pahātabba*) is accomplished.

When a Steam-entrant or (*sotāpanna*) advances through the three higher Paths - Knowledge, he has no need for purging wrong view and doubt through comprehension as it has already been done once and for all. What is required of him is to purge the remaining eight lesser evils (*kilesas*)* through mental development of a higher order (*bhāvanā pahātabba*).

For Stream-entry lustful passion (*kāma rāga*) ill will (*vyāpāda*) and restlessness (*uddhacca*) are not yet expected to be totally overcome. Lay life therefore is still possible. A profound knowledge of the Four Noble Truths itself

is the requisite attainment. This knowledge may begin by listening to some wise person explaining it. By profound knowledge is meant acquiring such sufficient insight as to leave one in full confidence in the Truths which is complementary to abandonment of wrong view, more specifically the wrong view of a non-existent *atta* or *sakkāya-ditthi*.

Therefore it should be noted that the Path-practice for the first stage of *sotapatti magga ñāna* and for the three higher stages is basically different: the former requires just a rejection of the theory of self, *atta*, which comes when the truth of *dukkha* is realized; the latter requires finer mental development for uprooting passion and other frailties of the mind such as ill will, etc. Proctors of

* 'The eight lesser evils (*kilesas*)': *loba* (desire), *dosa* (anger), *moha* (ignorance), *mana* (conceit), *ṭḥina* (sloth), *uddhacca* (distractedness), *ahirika* (shamelessness), *anottappa* (recklessness of moral consequences).

the *Dhamma* should make discrimination between the two objectives lest much effort should be wasted. For if the yogi directed his efforts initially at the elimination of passion by austere practice, or of distractedness (restlessness), etc. he would get nowhere. His faith in the practice would falter, he would feel frustrated. His initial effort must be directed towards eradication of wrong view about self and thereby clear his mind of doubts about the Truths. Unless he has gained this requisite initial insight, his efforts towards the finer attainments would be as futile as the boatman who rowed hard but left his moorings still untied.

“**First, dispel doubt”, the Buddha’s exhortation to the thousand ascetics**.

It’s not going naked,

Nor wearing netted hair,

Nor leaving the teeth uncleansed,

Nor fasting for long,

Nor sleeping on brambly ground,

Nor smearing the body with dirt,

Nor assuming a squatting posture–

That purifies a mortal, (bent on purity),

Who has not expelled the doubts*

Piercing his heart

And is deluded by a self.#

Now, by discarding doubts,

And through zealous efforts

Along the Eightfold Noble Path,

One is destined to Deathlessness (*nibbāna*).

(*Na naggacariyā na jatā na pankā nānāsakā*

thantilasāyikā vā rajo jallam ukkutikappadhānam

sodhenti maccam avitinnakankham

Sallam pahantvāna dhammesu vāyamanto amatassa bhāgo.)

(*Dhammapada*, v. 141)

* ‘The doubts’, There are eight doubts: See p. 151 ante; and sixteen doubts, see p. 150 ante.

Dhammapada, v. 141 (Refer the Buddha’s discourse to the thousand ascetics).

Preparing the Mind for Meditative Practice

From the above discourse it follows that one aspiring to the Path must first clear away doubts. This may be made possible, as a first step, gathering sufficient ‘imparted’ knowledge from someone competent to explain the Noble Truths. Call it proper orientation, if you like. For this is a necessary step.

The yogi must first make sure that the meditative practice is not muddled up with ignorance, craving and a sense of self which are the most chronic cankers. That is why it is advised here that he ask himself these questions: what is my purpose in this meditation? The proper answer should be “because I want to end rebirth”. “Why?” “Because rebirth implies one of the thirty-one planes of existence, most probably the four miserable states of *apāya*. And also because birth entails ageing and death, is marked by impermanence, ill and unreality or absence of real substance (*anatta*). Only through a stoppage of rebirth can one escape from all those forms of *dukkha*.” Having made one’s objective clear in this manner, the desire for *nibbāna* becomes pure without being tainted by the recurrent defilements of ignorance, craving and clinging. How do those defilements become extinct? Through insight that all forms of existence rooted in rebirth are woeful (*dukkha*), and that the end of the process of rebirth is real peace, one realizes *Nibbāna*. At that instant of gaining insight, the innate ignorance that had deluded him into pinning his hopes on some higher form of existence is dispelled. This knowledge of the unsatisfactoriness of all forms of existence (rebirth) dries up the former craving for existence. The effort of the yogi in such a case is free from rebirth-generating volition: it becomes the non-productive kamma, the noble class of *kamma* of Path attainment. Preparing the mind in the above manner before setting out for meditating is highly beneficial. It can bring Path–knowledge within reach here and now.

“Who meditates?” There is none - only the desire is there.

(Reference *Ariyāvamsa Kathā*).

Before each meditating session the yogi should consider who it is that is going to meditate. For in the ultimate (*paramattha*) sense there is no person or being who meditates (or, for that matter, does anything). As the Commentary says:

"Where there is action as cause 'the doer' of the action as well as 'the sufferer' of its consequent result is spoken of by the wise merely for the sake of conveying the abstruse sense of the ultimate truth."

(*Kārane sati kārakoti vipākappavattiyā sati*

patisamvedakoti samaññāmattena panditā vohāranti).

- *VisuddhiMagga*.

In our context here, 'the doer' i.e., the mediator, in reality is neither you nor any person, but merely the 'desire' to end rebirth, and the result of that desire is the taking up of the Path-practice. Only a set of cause and result or effect - no doer is there in truth and reality.

Touching on the noble lineage, says (*Ariyāvamsa Kathā*):

"He who considers, "I meditate for insight", does not divest himself from the delusion of self. (For actually speaking), it is only the will (*sankhāra*) conditioned by confidence (faith) and volition (*cetanā*) that is reflecting on the nature (i.e., impermanence, ill and unreality or insubstantiality) of the conditioned *dhammas* such as mind and mental concomitants. It is only the conditioned phenomena analyzing, grasping and making (sound) judgment. He who takes it in this (true) light divests himself from delusion."

(*Aham [vipassanān] vipassāmi mama vipassanāti*

gaṇhato hi ditthīugghātanam nāma na hoti.

Sankharāva sankhare vipassanti sammasanti

Vavatthapenti pariggaṇhantī ti gaṇhato pana

Ditthiugghātanm nāma hoti.) - Ibid.

“He who considers ‘(I) meditate well, (I) meditate with a glad heart’ does not divest himself of conceit (*māna*). He, who takes the true attitude that it is only the conditioned phenomena analyzing, grasping and judging the conditioned phenomena, divests himself from conceit.”

(*Sutthu vipassāmi manāpam vipassāmīti gaṇhato*

pana māna samugghāto nāma na hoti. Sankhārāva

sankhāre . . . . (p) māna samugghāto nāma hoti) . . Ibid.

“He who considers ‘(I) am able to meditate’, in the fond attachment to his good deed does not abandon desire (*nikanti*) (for existence). He, who adopts the correct view that it is only the conditioned phenomena analyzing, grasping and judging the conditioned phenomena, abandons desire.

(*Vipassitum sakkomīti vipassanam assādentassa*

nikantipariyādanam nāma na hoti sankhārāva . . .

(p) nikantipariyādānam nāma hoti.) - Ibid.

The Path-Knowledge in its Mundane Stage and Supramundane Stage

The Path has two stages - the mundane and the supramundane. The eight factors of Path-Knowledge at the Path-consciousness moment are called the supra-mundane. The consciousness that is striving for the Path through eliminating the defilements is the mundane, since it is still in association with the mundane and has not attained insight knowledge of the Path.

The Noble Path has been defined thus:

“Through (the practice of) this path (consisting of right understanding, right thinking and right conduct, verbally as well as bodily, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration) cessation of *dukkha*, i.e., the birthless, the non-arising, non-becoming, the unconditioned (*nibbāna*) is made the object of consciousness whereby the mind is inclined to or facing cessation. As the result cessation becomes imbued in the mind, pleasing and most satisfactory. Thus the

mind gladly opts for (*gacchati*)* cessation. Hence the practice of the Path is called the practice leading to cessation of *dukkha* (which, after all, is cessation of rebirth).

(*Etāya dukkhanirodham gacchati ārammanavasena*

tadabhi mukhī bhūtattā patipadā ca hoti dukkha

nirodha pattiya tasma dukkhanirodha gāminipatipadā

ti vuccati.)

- Ibid.

In Meditating 'Cessation Is Bliss',

Concentrate On Cessation, Not On Bliss.

Meditation for Path-Knowledge requires that *nibbāna* be the object of consciousness. For instance, in meditating, "Cessation is bliss", cessation is *nibbāna*: bliss is the attribute of *nibbāna*, so described because of the tranquility in realizing the unconditioned *dhamma* and release from *dukkha*. Accordingly the mediator must not concentrate on bliss; instead, he must make *nibbāna* the object of consciousness. Similarly, in meditating 'Non-arising is bliss', 'Non-becoming is bliss', or 'Birthlessness is bliss', bliss is not to be the object of meditation. Cessation must be the object. When bliss is made the object, craving and delusion are always present.

Developing Insight (*vipassanā*): Significance of the Term.

In practicing for the Path-knowledge with right understanding, the significance of the term *vipassanā* should be noted.

"Because it views the conditioned *dhammas* such as the aggregates in diverse ways such as being impermanent, etc., it is called *vipssana*." (*Khandhādi sankhata dhamme aniccādi vividhākārena passatīti vipassanā*).

- *Atthasālini* (Commentary).

* ‘Opts for’ (*gacchati*: lit., ‘goes to’)

It views ‘in diverse ways’ means: –

For instance, in *rūpa kāya*, physical body, alone, one may view it to encompass the Four Noble Truths. The sentient body consists of twenty parts or aspects such as hair constituted of the element of extension (*pathavī dhātu*), twelve parts or aspects such as bile (*pittam*) constituted of the element of cohesion (āpo dhatu), four parts or aspects such or the beining heat (*santappana tejo*) constituted of the element of heat (*tejo*) and six aspects such as the supportive quality (*vitthambhana*) of the element of motion (*vayo dhātu*). These forty-two aspects of the body may very well serve as objects of meditation as being constituted of the four primary or essential elements. Or else they may be reflected upon as to their inherent characteristics such as: hardness, cohesiveness, thermal properties or supportiveness. Or else they may be viewed as being impermanent, ill and not-self since they lack life, soul, they are insensate, merely elements, subject to continuous oppression, and beyond anyone’s control. They may be viewed as being caused by ignorance, craving, clinging and *kamma*: as being conditioned and as such *dukkha*. If the causes that give rise to materiality - i.e., ignorance, craving, clinging and *kamma* - are put out through the Path-knowledge, materiality ceases to rise again. Thus on materiality one may meditate to cover the four Truths, - *dukkha*, the origin of *dukkha*, the cessation of *dukkha* and the Path leading to cessation. That is why *vipassanā* means the possible method of viewing conditioned *dhammas* in various ways (*vividhākarena*).

On Discriminating the Characteristic, etc., of Impermanence, Ill, Not-self.

Insight-Knowledge may be noted in respect of its characteristic, function, manifestation and near cause as follows: –

“Insight-Knowledge may be noted in respect of the following its character is to penetrate the inherent nature such as hardness, tactility, sensitivity, perceptivity, understanding (of things) as well as their common characteristics such as impermanence; its function is to destroy the delusion concerning those true

characteristics; it is manifested as having clear view (being free from delusion); its near cause is concentration of mind. Thus should it be known?"

(*Paññāya lakkhanādīni sabhavappativedhanam*

Mohandhaviddhamsanañca asammoho samādhi ca).

- Ibid.

Characteristic and function further explained: –

"By characteristic is meant inherent nature and common features such as impermanence, etc. By function is meant being well-equipped or endowed."

(Sabhāvo vā sāmaññam vā lakkhanam nāma.

Kiccam vā sampatti vā raso nāma).

- *Atthasālinī*

Regarding common features or characteristics, the characteristics such as impermanence, ill, not-self are inherent in mind-and-matter (the aggregates). The *yogi* should contemplate on those characteristics that lie in the aggregates. When those characteristics are impressed hard on the mind, attachments to the aggregates die away. Any form of existence will then become burdensome, loathsome and disagreeable. Thus craving is abandoned.

To turn to *VisuddhiMagga* again: –

"All these conditioned phenomena of mind-and-matter that have been caused to arise out of certain conditions are impermanent. For they rise and fall; they change; they are ephemeral; they are contrary to permanence, i.e., they run against permanence."

(*Etthantare sabbe sankhārā aniccā kasmā uppādāvayavattito ca vipari nāmato ca tāvakālikato ca niccapatikkhepato ca aniccā*.)

- *VisuddhiMagga*.

These are the four reasons that explain *aniccā*, impermanence.

"All these conditioned phenomena of mind-and-matter that have been caused to arise out of certain conditions, go through the moment of development (*thī khana*).

At that very moment the development is headed for decay only. So they are harassed by ageing or decay. Having decayed, they inexorably die at the moment of dissolution (*bhanga khana*). Thus being constantly subject to arising, developing and dissolution (i.e., birth, ageing and death) they are *dukkha*. Further, because it is extremely painful to have to undergo birth, ageing and death; and because they are just the bases or home of all those painful happenings; and because they are contrary to peace and happiness, or because they are just the opposite of the bliss of non-arising, non decaying *nibbāna*, they are called *dukkha*."

(*Yasmā ca Uppannā sankhārā thitim pāpunanti*

thitiyam jarāya kilamanti jaram patvā avassam

bhijjanti tasmā abhiṇhasampatipīlanato dukkhamato

dukkhavatthuto sukapatikkhepato ca dukkhā.)

- *VisuddhiMagga*.

Those are the four reasons that explain *dukkha*.

All these conditioned phenomena of mind-and-matter that have been caused to arise out of certain conditioned do not respect anybody's wishes, so that there is none who can successfully wish: "may the developing moment (*thī khana*) for the conditioned things not proceed towards decay; i.e., may the teeth not come off, may the hair not turn gray, may the faculties not weaken; may the ageing mind-and-matter not die". Because these conditioned things are beyond anyone's control they are not-self (*anatta*). Besides, they are without ownership in the sense that if they were anybody's own in reality, they would be well protected from ageing and death. For this reason too they are not-self. Again, they lack substance in the sense that they are merely in a state of flux, taking their own course and obeying no one's wishes. And also they are contrary to any concept of *atta*. They run counter to popular belief in an individual entity spoken of conventionally as I or he or she, or man or woman, etc.

(*yasmā ca uppannā sankhārā thitim pāpunantu thānappatta mā jira ntu jarāpattā mā bhijjantuti. Imesu tīsu thānesu kassaci vasavattibhāvo natthi tena vasavattanakārena suññova. Tasma suññato ca assñ mikato ca (asārakatoca) atta patikkhepato ca anattāti*.) - *VisuddhiMagga*

Those are the four reasons that explain *anatta*, not-self.

In the above ways should the material and mental phenomena and their innate nature of impermanence, ill and not-self be meditated upon.

When their innate nature is thus impressed on one's consciousness by persistent meditation, the aggregates that arise from condition will be seen as the home of those woeful characteristics, and attachment for them as one's own will give way to detachment. No life or being or person will be found. This is the extinction of wrong view of *atta*. Insight-development (*vipassanā*) is nothing but the mental practice and discipline that enables one to see every part or aspect (hair, body hair, etc.), of the five aggregates called the body as being impermanent, woeful and unsubstantial or unreal, so that no craving for a fresh set of aggregates will linger. In other words, it is the practice that roots out craving through realizing the painfulness of rebirth and the attendant ills of ageing, disease and death. That being so, object for meditation is not hard to find; it is right there inside you. Reflect wisely on the reality of things that are happening in you: the hazards of having come into existence - ageing, disease, death, grief, sorrow, etc. Contemplating the dangers of rebirth, the inherent characteristics of conditioned phenomena will also become evident.

The group of five saw the Truth on perceiving *dukkha*

In proclaiming the Noble Truth of *dukkha* in his first sermon (*Dhammac- akka Pavattana Sutta*) to the group of five ascetics, the Buddha described that 'birth is *dukkha*; ageing is *dukkha*; disease is *dukkha*; death is *dukkha*; to be associated with the undesirable is *dukkha*; to be separated from the desired is *dukkha*; not getting what one wants is *dukkha*. In short, the five aggregates of clinging is *dukkha*."

On hearing this all the five ascetics attained the Path at the first stage. It is exhorted here that the seven aspects of *dukkha* as taught by the Buddha in *Dhammcakka* be the object of constant meditation.

In another *sutta*, (*Satipatthāna Sutta*), the Buddha gives twelve aspects of *dukkha*. One should not therefore think that *dukkha* is of only the seven aspects. Whenever there is the existence of the five aggregates *dukkha*, as well as *anicca* and *anatta*, are always present as of necessity. That is why aggregates have to be constantly preserved by means of *kamma*, mind, temperature and nutriment. It is not only the aggregates that are impermanent, painful and not-self, the conditioning factors therefore, i.e., *kamma*, mind, temperature and nutriment, also are impermanent, troublesome or painful and unreal or unsubstantial that need constant care for their existence.

It is therefore to be concluded that volitional acts create existence that arises and falls; having fallen, fresh existences arise to commit volitional acts that sustain the never-ending round of rebirths bringing in their train ageing, disease and death. Host of these existences are in the miserable states of *apāya*. No glorious state is free from trouble, ageing and death. So it must go on like the ox that works the mill

repeating its footsteps to nowhere. Contemplating this hopeless situation that one is in, one should arouse oneself to fain release from the yoke of *samsara*, or rebirth and incline one's mind towards the birth-less, *nibbāna*.

The Causes and the Conditions themselves are

impermanent, troublesome and unreal.

The Buddha has pointed out that it is not only the presence of existence that are impermanent, but also the very causes and conditions that produce the aggregates are impermanent, etc. – *vide Samyutta Nikāya*.

Bhikkhus, materiality (*rūpam*) is not under one's own control, not life, not a being, unreal, unsubstantial *anatta*. The very causes (*hetu*) that produced materiality and the conditions (*paccaya*) that support the arising of the materiality are beyond anybody's control. How could the aggregates produced by something unsubstantial (*anatta*) be considered substantial or real?

(*Rupam bhikkhave anatta yopi hetu yopi paccayo*

rupassa uppādāya sopi anattā anatta sambhūtām

bhikkhave rūpam kuto attā bhavissati)

– *Samyutta Nikāya*, *Khandha Vagga*.

On the impermanence (*anicca*) and ill (*dukkha*) of materiality (*rūpa*), the same argument holds: (hence no translation is rendered on it):

> (*Rūpam bhikkhave aniccā dukkhā yopi hetu yopi paccayo rupassa upada ya sopi aniccā dukkha anicca dukkha sambhūtam bhikkhave rupam kuto niccam sukham bhavissati*) - Ibid.

The above statements refer to materiality (*rūpa*). As regards the four other aggregates-*vedanā* (feeling), *sañña* (perception), *sankhārā* (mental formations) and *viññāna* (consciousness) the same argument applies.

One may therefore meditate on any of the five aggregates as to the three characteristics. The past cause is the productive or *javana kamma*. The present conditions for the arising of materiality are fourfold-*kamma*, *citta* (mind), temperature (*utu*) and nutriment. The present conditions for the arising of mentality

are the six sets of sense-bases and sense-objects. All of those causes and conditions are changeable, impermanent, fraught with pain and not-self. The present sense-bases and sense-objects, as also contact, feeling, perception, etc., are changing constantly, hence impermanent, troublesome and unreal. The five aggregates of existence therefore constitute the truth of *dukkha*. Hence the pali *pancuppādānakkhandhā pi dukkha*.

***Dukkha* explained in twelve ways according to *Satipatthana Sutta*.**

The twelve aspects of *dukkha* are as follows:

1. Birth (rebirth) is *dukkha*:

(*Tattha katamo jāti yā tesam tesam sattānam tamhi tamhi sattanikāye jāti sanjati okkanti abhinibbhatti khandhānam pātubhavo patilābho ayamvuccati (bhikkhave) jāti*.)

2. Loosing one's teeth, the hair turning gray, the body getting bent, the eye-sight getting poor, etc., are *dukkha*:

(*Tattha katamo jarā yā tesam tesan sattānam tamhi tamhi sattanikāye jarā jīranatā khandiccam pāliccam valittacatā ayuno samhāni indriyānam paripāko ayam vuccati (bhikkhave) jarā*).

3. Death is *dukkha*:

(*Tattha katamam maranam. (p.) Cutivacanatā bhedo antaradhānam maccumaranam kālakiriyā khandhānambhedo kalevarassa nikkhepo jīvitindriyassa upacchedo idham vuccati (bhikkhave) maranam*).

4. Grief is *dukkha*: grief on account of death of one's dear ones, sickness, less of property, virtue, steadfastness, etc.: –

(*Katamo ca bhikkhave soko yo kho bhikkhave aññataraññatarena vyassanena samannāgatassa aññataraññatarena dukkhadhammena phutthassa soko socanā socitattham antosoko anto parisoko ayam vuccati bhikkhave soko*).

5. Lamentation is *dukkha*: –

(*Katamoca bhikkhave paridevo yo kho bhikkhave aññataraññatarena vyassanena samannāgatāssa aññataraññatarena dukkhadhammena phutthassa ādevo paridevo (p) ādevitattham paridevitattham ayam vuccati bhikkhave paridevo)*

6. Physical pain is *dukkha*: –

(*Katamañca bhikkhave dukkham. Yam kho bhikkhave kāyikam dukkham kāyikam asātām kayasamphassajam dukkham asātam vedayitam idham vuccati bhikkhave dukkham*).

7. Sorrow is *dukkha*: – Mental suffering associated with anger: –

(*Katamañca bhikkhave domanassam. Yam kho bhikkhave cetasikan dukk ham cetasikam asātam manosamphassajam dukkham asātam vedayitam. Idam vuccati bhikkhave domanassam*).

8. Anguish or despair is *dukkha*:-

(*Katamoca bhikkhave upāyāso. Yo kho bhikkhave aññataraññatārena vyassanena samannāgatassa aññataraññatarena dukkha dhammena phutthassa āyāso upāyāso āyāsitattham upāyāsitattham ayam vuccati bhikkhave upāyāso*).

Dīgha Nikāya, *Mahāvagga*

9. To be associated with the undesirable is *dukkha*, like unwanted persons, or animals such as dogs, pigs, gadflies, mosquitoes, flies, sun's heat or severe cold, ugly sight, odious smell, disturbing noise, unpalatable taste, unpleasant touch, etc:-

(*Katamoca bhikkhave appiyehi sampayogo dukkho. Idha yassa te honti anitthā akantā amanāpā rūpā saddā gandhā rasā photthabbā dhammā ye vā panassa te honti anatthakāmā ahitakāmā aphasukakāmā ayogakkhemakāmā yā tehi saddhim sangati sāmāgamo samodhānam missībhāvo. Ayam vuccati bhikkhave appiyehi sampayogo dukkho*).

10. To be separated from dear ones or things is *dukkha*:

(*Katamoca bhikkhave piyehi vippayogo dukkho. Idha yassa te honti ittha kantā manāpā rupā saddā gandhā rasā phutthabbhā dhammā ye vā panassa te honti. Atthakāmā hitakāmā (p) mātā vā pitā vā bhata vā bhagini vā (p) ñātisātohitā vā yā tenhi saddhim asangati asamāgamo asamodhānam amissibhāvo. Ayam vuccati bhikkhave piyehi vippayogo dukkho*).

11. Rebirth is *dukkha* (That rebirth is not ended by mere wishing is *dukkha*: it has to be broken by Path-Knowledge):

(*Katamañca bhikkhave yampiccham nalabhati tampi dukkham. Jātidham mānam bhikkhave sattānam evam icchā upajjati ahovata mayam na jātidhammā assāma na ca vata no jātidhammā āgacchheyyonti Na kho panetam icchāya patta bbam. Idham vuccati bhikkhave yampiccham na labhati tampi dukkham*). - Ibid.

Ageing is *dukkha* (That ageing cannot be prevented by any amount of wishing is *dukkha*):-

(*Jarādhammānam bhikkhave sattānam evam icchā upajjati ahovata mayam na jarādhammā assāma na ca vata no jarādhammo āgaccheyyonti na kho panetam icchāya patabbam. Idham vuccati bhikkhave yampiccham no labh ati tampi dukkham*).

Disease is *dukkha* (That sickness cannot be prevented by any amount of wishing is *dukkha*):-

(*Vyādhi dhammānam bhikkhave sattānam evam icchā uppajjati ahovata mayam na vyādhidhammā āgaccheyyonti na kho panetām icchāya pattabbam. Idham vuccati bhikkhavve yampiccham na labhati tampi dukkham*).

Death is *dukkha* (That death cannot be prevented by any amount of wishing is *dukkha*.):-

(*Maranadhammānam bhikkhave sattānam evam icchā uppajjati ahovata mayam na maranadhammā assāma na ca vata no maranadhammā āgacchey yonti. Na kho panetam icchāya pattabbam. Idham vuccati bhikkhave yampic cham no labhati tampi dukkham*).

Grief, lamentation, physical pain, sorrow, distress or anguish is dukkha: that these woes cannot be wished against is dukkha (for so long as lust, anger and delusion are present, no one is free from such woes):-

(*Soka parideva dukkkha domanassupāyāsa dhammānam bhikkhave sattānam evam icchā uppajjati ahovata mayam na soka parideva dukkha domanassupāyāsā*

āgaccheyyonti. Na kho panetam icchaya pattabbam. Idham vuccati bhikkhave yampiccham na labhati tampi dukkham). - Ibid.

12. In brief, all existence of the aggregate means *dukkha* because they are under constant arising and dissolution, they are impermanent, troublesome and lack real substance:-

(*Katameca bhikkhave sankhettena pāñcuppadānakkhandhā dukkhā. Seyathidam rūpupādānakkhandho vedanupādānakkhandho saññupādānakkhand ho sankharupādānakkhandho viññanupādānakkhandho. Ime vuccanti bhikkha ve pañcuppādānākkhāndhā dukkhā*). - Ibid.

In *Dhammapada* the *dukkha* of five aggregates is stated as follows:-

"There is no trouble (*dukkha*) as great as the

five aggregates. There is no happiness as great

as the calmness (*santi*) of the *khandhās*, where

no arising, development or dissolution occurs,

which is *nibbāna*."

When one meditates on the happiness of *nibbāna* in contrast with the woeful existence of the *khandhās* the mind develops an inclination to the calmness of *nibbāna* where there are no conditioned phenomena that rise and fall, that come into being just for dissolution, that are born just to age and die. Craving for fresh rebirth dies out. It is like one who found out a certain luscious, tempting fruit to be poisonous and so is not tempted by it; or like one who turns away from a sumptuous fare knowing the presence of a speck of excreta in it. When craving ceases, volitional actions that are responsible for rebirth automatically cease. This means *nibbāna*.

Once fallen into the Four Miserable States,

Fortunate existence is a far cry: simile of mother and child.

The purpose of insight development or Path-practice is the extirpation of craving for existence, with a keen sense of urgency and remorse (*samvega*) to extricate oneself from the hazards of rebirth. The yogi trains the mind on the dangers* that rebirth

entails there is none as dreadful as being born in the four miserable states of *apāya*. The physical and mental afflictions that prevail in these miserable states are so oppressive as not to allow a moment of respite. And one who has not cut off the process of rebirth is always liable to fall into the miserable states. This is so because fortunate existences are only the result of wholesome actions, and wholesome action are not of natural occurrence. For most beings generally are steeped in greed, hate and delusion so that it is not in every existence that wholesome actions are forthcoming. Wholesome attitudes of non-greed, non-hate and non-delusion are rare attributes. This accounts for the vast likelihood of falling into the miserable states.

Even if one is under favourable *kammic* conditions and born in one of the fortunate existence there is no power to protect one against the three undesirable advents of ageing, disease and death. Those three eventualities befall every one without fail. They are the events that a mother is helpless in wishing against her son. See *Anguttara Nikāya*, 'The three *Amātiputtika* hazards'. That is why *samsāra* is so dreadful. Being committed to *samsāra* is no one's making but one's own. In the ultimate sense, it is the ignorance of the dangers that rebirth entails. In *Anamatagga Sutta* the Buddha tells us that ignorance coupled with craving is responsible for an endless series of births, ageing, and deaths, like the ox that work the mill. For deluded by ignorance, the ephemeral pleasures loom large before the worldling while the endless round of *dukkha* recede behind the screen of delusion.

Ignorance and Craving prolong *Samsāra; AnamataggaSutta*

"Inconceivable, *bhikkhus*, is the beginning of *samsāra*. The ramblings of the multitude, hampered as they are by ignorance, bound by the ties of craving (falsely assuming the aggregates of existence as 'I' 'myself' and 'mine') through precarious round of existences, now in a noble state, then in miserable ones, now in fine material state, then in gross or base material state, etc.,

* that surround rebirth; insight into these dangers is called *bhaya*-ñ*āna*. Of the dangers

(which, in the ultimate truth, are only a chain of aggregates, sense-bases and elements), is unknowable as to their beginning."

(*Anamataggoyam bhikkhave samsāro pubbakoti*

na paññayati avijjā nivaranānam sattānam

tanhasamyojananam sandhāvatam samsāratam). - *Dīgha Nikāya, Nidāna Vagga Samyutta*

Note that word "multitudes" (*sattānam*) is used by the Buddha in discoursing to his disciples to his disciples merely as conventional usage. In the ultimate sense no being or person (*satta*) exists: only the aggregates, sense-bases and elements are occurring through cause and effect according to the Law of Dependent Origination. This fact of the ultimate truth of *samsāra* is put by the author of *VisuddhiMagga* in the following terms:-

"The (bare) fact of the uninterrupted flow, in a succession, of the five aggregates, the elements and the sense-bases are called *samsāra*".

(*Khandhānañca patipāti dhātu āyatanānā ca*

Abbocchinam vattamānā samsāroti pavuccati).

Even if one happens to be born in some fortunate existences, he must necessarily die, and his afterlife is most insecure in the sense that there is a very slim chance of getting another fortunate existence. One should on that account take a very grave view of the matter and, cultivating a sense of urgency and remorse (*samvega*), strive for putting an end to rebirth.

"Being thrust upward by wholesome actions that land one in the fortunate existences of sensual spheres, the fine material sphere or the formless spheres, those born in the sensual spheres and the fine material worlds-however high they may happen to be in those spheres - are liable to fall again to the depths of the unfortunate states."

(*Ukkhita puññatejena kāmarūpagatim gatā*

Bhavaggantampi sampattā puna gacchanti

duggatim) - *Vibhanga*

"Those having long spans of life, - the longest being eighty-four thousand aeons or *kappsa* – at the end of their life spans, (must) die. There is no form of existence that is eternal. Thus, declared the Great Sage, the Buddha."

(*Tāva dīghayukā satta cavanti āyusankhayā*

Natthi koci bhavo nicco. Iti vuttam mahesinā). - Ibid.

The Buddha used to call up his disciples in these words: “Come, *bhikkhu*, practise well the Noble Way, (intent on the birthless *nibbāna*), for the sake of putting an end to *dukkha* (i.e., the end of rebirth).”

(*Ehi bhikkhu cara brahmacariyam sammā dukkhassa antakīriyāya*).

- *Vinaya*, *MahāVagga*.

The essence here is that rebirth means *dukkha*: the end of *dukkha* means the attainment of *nibbāna* where the process of rebirth ceases and there is no arising of the aggregates that must dissolve.

Why the end of *dukkha* should be one’s good may be explained here. The Buddha on a certain occasion illustrated the odds against a fortunate state. Rebirth takes place in the four miserable states of *apāya* or in the seven fortunate planes of existence or in the twenty Brahma realms. Of those thirty-one forms of existence it is extremely painful to be born in *apāya*. In the fortunate existence of humans too ageing, disease and death is always afflicting them. When one falls into one of the unfortunate states it is very difficult to rise again to the fortunate forms of birth. The chances may be illustrated thus: Let us say there is a mountain which is one *yojana* in length, in breath and in height. Let us this mountain be dropped into the great ocean whose depth is reckoned as eighty-four thousand *yojanas*. It would be easier for the mountain to rise to the surface of the ocean than for one to get out of the *apāyas*. To stress this point, the Buddha placed such a small amount of earth as would his finger nail would hold, and asked the *bhikkhus* which would be bigger, this small pinch of earth, or the Great Earth reckoned as two-hundred and forty thousand *yojans* thick. The *bhikkhus* replied that the pinch of earth is infinitesimal compared to the Great Earth. The same comparison holds true between the multitude, suffering in the miserable states of *apāya* and those that happen to be born in the fortunate existences, the Buddha explained.

This fact of the narrowness of chances to be born in the fortunate existences discoursed by the Buddha in *Anamatagga Sutta* has been versified by *Nyaungbintha Sayadaw*, the famous venerable from *Nyaungbintha*, for the purpose of memorizing* by the devout ones. A free rendering of it follows:-

“*Anamataggoyam bhikkhave samsāro pubbakoti na paññayati*.”

“Inconceivable, *Bhikkhus*, is the beginning of the world (*samsāra*)” said the Buddha. The vastness of the ocean of *samsāra* may perhaps be illustrated thus:-

Let a highly ambitious man with great prowess, wishing to ascertain how many mothers he had had** in the past existences, cut down all timber and bamboo growing all over the *Jambudīpa* Island-Continent reckoned to be ten thousand

yojanas wide; then let him chop up all those trees and bamboos into bits of four inches each to represent a mother of his in the past. Countless mountains of cut pieces might have risen, and all the timber and bamboo in *Janbudīpa* might have become exhausted, still the number of his past mothers would be far from being completely counted. This allegory should fairly indicate the timelessness of *samsāra*.

* ‘Memorizing’: is for popularization.

** ‘how many mothers he had’: lit., ‘how many wombs he had entered’.

Taking firm root in the dual causes of ignorance and craving, all being is caught in the stout bonds and shackles of rebirth. There is no hiding place in the universe where one can escape rebirth. Try as he might, he cannot make a dint on the steel grip. For the ten fetters are the strongest of bonds: no chains ever secure the greatest of tuskers as strongly as the fetters of existence (*samyojanas*).

Further, all being are held in subjugation by the four mighty overlords, namely: Birth: Ageing, Disease, and Death. Each exacts his toll relentlessly. Forever undergoing change, all sentient beings are perpetual serfs of Birth, the supreme overlord. And at the thirty-one planes of existence many flounder and sink to the depths of miserable states; a handful might rise once in a while to glorious states, seemingly happy. But, alas, how long do they last in such fortunate states? May he be a resplendent Brahma; yet (if he has remained ignorant of the *Dhamma*), he is liable to tumble down to the animal world as an ignobly granting swine! Such is the way of the conditioned world. Thus the Lord of the Celestial World might fall from his splendid state to toil as a panting laborer in the human plane; or a Universal Monarch endowed with the seven precious gifts might in his next existence fare as a half-starving beggar roaming about a stricken village. Of infinite variety are worldly conditions.

Pleasure and pain come to one’s lot in the course of the cycle of existences. But fortunate existences are few and far between: one out of a countless number of unfortunate ones. Suffering is the rule: a life of ease and facility a very, very rare exception. So we have been born as animals of sort -horned, tailed, crested, striped, quadrupeds, winged, centipedes, reptiles: at times hanging upside down, at others going crosswise; of various shapes, sizes and colors - bright or dull, spotted or striped; articulate in some births, dumb in others; of lovely appearance in some, nasty - looking in others; living on land in some; belonging to the water in other; soaring in the skies in some, diving in depths at others; and often being hunted over and over. On many occasions we have been wayfarers on the run, resplendent or wretched in turns, our spheres ranging from the topmost *Brahmā loka* of neither perception nor non-perception down to *avīci niraya* , the nethermost torturous realm.

Yes, it’s a cauldron these whirling wayfarers are cast into now popping up, then diving deep, deep down. Endless diseases, endless deaths. Or it’s like a restless

eddy where lumber turns round and round or a flywheel engaged all the time, or the merry-go-round (mostly without merriment). In one of the five modes of birth we are born again and again, only to undergo ageing, disease and death.

But do we take fright of this woeful world? Do we ever really feel fed up with it?

Perverted in our perceptions by the six senses, we are apt to take the crooked path as straight; the evil as good; lured so strongly as the monkey that licks the honey on the razor's edge lengthwise.

Yes, all worldlings lack sound judgment; it's a matter of mere degree in the paucity of wisdom. Blind to see the impermanence, the ill, the impersonal character of the five aggregates which is taken up as "my self", the ego works wonders in its waywardness. The deluded view of a personality leads one to vanity or conceit. Pride and haughtiness are our natural attributes. Virtuous conduct is hard to come by, leave alone spiritual development. Lost in the four floods of clinging, we tend to be always self-interested and self-centered in outlook. Righteousness is generally forgotten altogether.

Craving is behind the endlessness of *samsāra*, propelling the cycle of existences. If the cycle is to be broken, craving must be abandoned.

Our advice here is: you have your destiny in your own hands: cultivate merit by doing wholesome acts. Your merit (*kamma*) is your father, your mother, your only surety, your sole godfather, your benign benefactor, your passport.

Do not be misled into evil by a puffed-up ego.

Be modest; be righteous;

Puññam bhikkhave mā bhāyitta

Puññam bhāyato sukham bhāyatināma.

"Don't be afraid to do well (i.e., wholesome acts that lead to deliverance from *samsāra*). He who is afraid to do good deeds is called one who fears the happiness (that prevails in the fortunate existences favorable to the attainment of *nibbāna*)."

Reflecting On the Twelve-fold

Evil of the Round of Rebirths, (*samsāra*).

The following is a free rendering of the Myanmar verse which is believed to serve as a constant reminder (by memorizing it) to the dreadful state of the endless round of rebirths. When a sense of urgency and remorse comes to be realized through contemplating on the dangers of *samsāra* one is well placed on the Path.

All conditioned existence is *dukkha* because whatever arises must disappear, and involves constant bother. Consider the physical aspect: one must grow old, get ill and die. In the mental aspect sorrow and grief, etc., rend the heart. Having to put up with the undesirable, or having to be parted from the loved things, one is always sad. And even if one wishes to get out of all this, i.e., the evils of the presence of the five aggregates, one is quite helpless: therein lies real '*dukkha'*: Verily is this a vicious round of events, dreary and loathsome.

Fortunate existences are hard to come by: mostly one wanders through miserable existences only - in the torturous retribution of the *nirayas*, or in the animal kingdom, or as hungry sub-humans (*petas*) or as frightened, unhappy demons (*asūrakāya*). Remember the chances of being born in the fortunate existences as symbolized by a pinch of earth on the finger-nail when compared to the Great Earth representing the four miserable states. This is also a frightening aspect of the body or mass of *dukkha* (*dukkakkhandha*).

Those are the ways to ponder seriously about *dukkha*.

Seeing the evils of rebirth which necessitates death, one should do well to strive for cessation (of rebirth) which alone ensures peace, *nibbāna*. To that end one must forsake craving, clinging and *kammic* actions. The setting of such goal is the practice of the Path. Treading the Path, one can attain the fruition of Path-Knowledge here and now.

That is the way for ending *dukkha*.

How *Samsāra's* Cyclic Suffering Is Perpetuated

Not knowing the dangers inherent in the five aggregates and the six sense-bases as being truly impermanent, troublesome and unreal or unsubstantial (*anatta*), one becomes attached to them. Ignorance, craving and wrong view keep one enamored of the unreal self as the man wedded to a demon under human guise. One is therefore pleased with the aggregates and sense-bases and thinks them as permanent, pleasant, one's own self, and agreeable. Deluded thus, *samsāric* round of rebirths is a happy thing to such a person. A man bound by the fetter of craving will never get out of *samsāra's* whirlpool of *dukkha*.

That is how *samsāra* is perpetuated.

How *Samsāra's* Cyclic Suffering Can Be Broken.

When one gains right understanding that any set of aggregates and sense-bases is evil considering its impermanence, troublesomeness and unreality, its inherent dangers become obvious. Just as the man wedded to a she-demon, on discovery of her true nature, dreads her, loathes her and forsakes her, so also the wise man gets weary of the five aggregates and the six sense-bases. He comes to know its three characteristics (*anicca, dukkha, anatta*). So he is not happy about them. He wants to get rid of them. He forsakes them. He has no attachment to them. He does not identify them as himself. Accordingly, he is not bound by them. This cessation of craving and false ego-view virtually puts him right on the path: be wins fruition of the First-Path-Knowledge.

That is how the bondage is cut and Fruition of the Path realized.

Meditating on this simple fact can lead to a sense of urgency and remorse that will dispel the ignorance of the Truth.

Meditating on the dissolution of things brings

seven kinds of knowledge leading to the Path.

Visuddhi Magga shows how insight into the dissolution of phenomena, *bhanga ñāna*, will lead to three stages of insight (*vipassanā*) and the four stages of resultant knowledge:

Katham āramana patisankhā bhangānupassane paññā vipassane ñānam.

Rūpārammanatā cittam upajjitvā bhijjati tam ārammanam patisankhā tassa cittassa bhangam anupassati. Ampassatīti katham anupassati.

Aniccato anupassati no niccato dukkhato anupassati no sukhato anattato anupassati no attato nibbindatī no nandati virajjati no rajjati nirodheti no samudeti patinissajjati no ādiyati.

Aniccato anupassanto niccasaññam pajahāti dukkhato anupassanto sukhasaññam pajahāti anattato anupassanto attasaññam pajahāti nibbindanto nandim pajahāti virajjanto rāgam pajahāti nirodhento samudayam pajahāti patinissajjanto ādānam pajahāti.*

The above *Pali* is about *rūpārammana*, visual objects. It applies also for the five remaining sense-objects; *saddarammana*, sounds; *gandhārammana* smells; *rasārammana*, tastes; *photthabbārammana*, bodily sensations; *dhammāramana*, thoughts.

The method of meditation is as follows:

As the mind attends to any one of the six senses, (i.e., when the sense-object comes into contact with the sense-base) meditate on the fact that both the sense-object and the mind (consciousness) itself are dying out and vanishing. Thus the impermanence, troublesomeness and not-self character of the aggregates, etc., are realized. Further, a weariness with the vanity of existence. (*nibbinda*), loathing (of the aggregates and the sense-bases) (*virajjana*), cessation (of attachment to them) (*nirodha*) and forsaking (them) (*patinisajja*), also appear in the mind.

When impermanence (of things) is meditated upon, the perception about their permanence ceases. (i.e., the false idea of permanence is cast aside). When *dukkha*(of things) is meditated upon, the perception about their pleasurable ness ceases. When the not - self character (of things) is meditated upon, the perception about the false self ceases. (*Aniccato anupassanto niccasaññam pajahāti,* etc.).

Nibbindanto nandim pajahāti: when the wearisomeness of things is meditated upon, one gets displeased with them; craving falls off.

Virajjanto rāgam pajahāti: when detachment from all things is meditated upon, passion dies out; dispassion becomes established.

* Original source, *PatisambhidāMagga*.

Nirodhento samudayam pajahāti: when cessation i.e., *nibbāna*, becomes the desired object, one forsakes craving; craving ceases.

Patinissajjanto ādānam pajahāti: when one contemplates on non-becoming as the desired object, the craving for fresh becoming ceases.

At the initial stage, the above forms of meditation have the effect of momentary (*tadanga*) cessation of defilements. After continuous practice the defilements can be cast away for a limited time (*vikkhambhana*); and ultimately the defilements get eradicated (*samuccheda*). Herein, weariness (*nibbinda*) knowledge is the forerunnner of the Path-Knowledge. Detachment (*virāgā*) knowledge is the Path-consciousness. *Nirodha* is the fruition-consciousness. *Patinissagga* is the reviewing-knowledge or *paccavekkhanā* ñāna.

Insight into decay and dissolution (*bhanga* ñ*āna*) as regards eye-consciousness comprises twice 14 kinds or 28 kind's altogether. For the six sense-bases, therefore there are, likewise, 28 for each (such as for ear-consciousness, etc.) thereby giving a total of 168 kinds.

Reckoned in another way, there are 40 kinds of *bhangañāna* for each of the 6 kinds of consciousness, i.e., with reference to each of the six sense-bases. So we have 240 kinds of *bhanga* ñ*āna*.

Herein, sense-objects, consciousness and conditioned phenomena constitute the Truth of *dukkha*. Attachment to them is the origin of *dukkha*. Abandonment of attachment amounts to Path-Knowledge, the way to end *dukkha*. Cessation that results from conscious abandonment of attachment or craving is the Truth of Cessation.

All the four Noble Truths are therefore realized simutaneously and Fruition of Path-Knowledge attained to, when the Insight into Dissolution (*bhanga* ñ*āna*) is gained.

Comprehending *Nibbāna* through contemplating on the forty features (to's) of the five aggregates.

According to *Patisambhidā Magga* the five aggregates may be contemplated on in respect of forty salient features in them. They are as follows:-

1. *Pañcakkhandhe* ***aniccato*** *passanto anulomikakhantim*

Patilabhati. Pañcannam khandhānam nirodho niccam

Nibbānanti passanto sammattaniyāmam okkamati.

"Realizing that the five aggregates, *khandhās*, are impermanent or unstable, one contemplates on the stability or un-changeability or cessation or non-arising of the *khandhas* that is virtually *nibbāna*; thus one attains to the stage of mental development in conformity with Path-knowledge (*anulomikakhantim*, lit., the enduring truth). One who perceives with the eye of wisdom that cessation of the five aggregates is the permanent escape from *dukkha* enters Path-knowledge (*sammattaniyāma*, lit., 'the Way of Truth')".

The essence is: knowing that the aggregates are impermanent, one contemplates on the undesirability of rebirth with a view to cessation of all of aggregates of existence. In this way the Path-knowledge dawns on him. Cessation means extinction of the *khandhās* without a trace (*anupādisesa*).

2. *Pañcakkhandhe* ***dukkhato*** *passanto anulomikakhantim*

Patilabhati. Pañcannam khandhānam nirodho sukham

nibbānanti passanto sammattaniyāmam okkamati.

"Realizing that the five aggregates (*khandhās*) are fraught with endless pain or perpetually woeful, one contemplates on the peace and tranquillity of cessation of all traces of *khandhā*, that is virtually *nibbāna*; thus one attains to 'conformity stage' in the development of Path-knowledge. One who perceives with the eye of wisdom that cessation of the five aggregates is the real freedom from *dukkha* enters Path-knowledge."

The five aggregates are under constant oppression by change; that is why they are painful. When they become extinct there is no basis for such oppression and hence no occasion for *dukkha*. Realizing this truth with the eye of wisdom, one wishes ardently for cessation of aggregates. When this desire becomes firmly established in one's consciousness, one enters the eternal safety of the Way of Truth.

3. *Pañcakkhandhe* ***rogato*** *passanto anulomikakhantim*

patilabhati. Pañcannam khandhānam nirodho arogam

nibbānanti passanto sammattaniyāmam okkamati.

"Realizing that the five aggregates are just like disease, one contemplates on the evils of the aggregates and attains to 'conformity stage' in the development of path-knowledge. One who contemplates thus is filled with joy in the knowledge of the Path, being able to abandon the deluded concepts of permanence, pleasurableness and self about the aggregates. One who perceives with the eye of wisdom that cessation of the five aggregates is freedom from disease, i.e., *nibbāna*, enters Path-knowledge."

The aggregates are the bases for evil that are like disease. When no basis remains, no disease can infest anything. Ardent desire for disease-free *nibbāna* is a way to path-knowledge.

4. *Pañcakkhandhe* ***gantato*** *passanto anulomikakhantim*

patilabhati. Pañcannam khandhānam nirodho agantan

nibbānanti passanto sammattaniyāmam okkamati.

"Realizing that the five aggregates are an abscess or open sore, one attains to 'conformity stage' in the development of Path-Knowledge. One who perceives with the eye of wisdom that cessation of the five aggregates is *nibbāna*, where no abscess ever afflicts anything, enters Path-knowledge."

5. *Pañcakkhandhe* ***sallato*** *passanto anulomikakhantim*

patilabhati. Pañcannam khandhanam nirodho asallam

nibbananti passanto sammattaniyāmam okkamati.

"Realizing that the five aggregates are a thorn in one's side, one attains to 'conformity stage' in the Path-Knowledge. One who perceives with the eye of wisdom that cessation of the five aggregates is *nibbāna* where no thorn has any place, enters Path-knowledge."

6. *Pañcakkhandhe* ***aghato*** *passanto anulomikakhantim*

patilabhati. Pañcannam khandhānam nirodho anagho

nibbānanti passanto sammattaniyāmam okkamati.

"Realizing that the five aggregates are pollution being affected by lust, hate and delusion, one attains to 'conformity stage' in the development of Path-Knowledge. One who perceives with the eye of wisdom that cessation of the aggregates is *nibbāna* that is free from pollution, enters Path-knowledge."

7. *Pañcakkhandhe* ***ābādhato*** *passanto anulomikakhantim*

patilabhati. Pañcannam khandhanam nirodho anābādham

nibbānanti passanto sammattaniyāmam okkamati.

"Realizing that the five aggregates are a pain, one attains to 'conformity stage' in the development of Path-Knowledge. One who perceives that cessation of the five aggregates is *nibbāna* where no affliction is present, enters Path-Knowledge."

8. *Pañcakkhandhe* ***parato*** *passanto anulomikakhantim*

patilabhati. Pañcannam khandhānam nirodho aparam

nibbānanti passanto sammattaniyāmam okkamti.

"Realizing that the five aggregates are a total stranger, one attains to 'conformity stage' in the development of Path-Knowledge. One who perceives that cessation of the five aggregates is *nibbāna* where no stranger is present, enters Path-knowledge."

The five aggregates are in truth total strangers since they do not have any sympathy or regard for anyone. They cannot be told not to grow old, not to get ill or not to die.

9. *Pañcakkhandhe* ***palokato*** *passanto anulomikakhantim*

patilabhati. Pañcannam khandhānam nirodho apalokadhammo

nibbānanti passanto sammattaniyāmam okkamati.

"Realizing that the five aggregates are destructible, one attains to 'conformity stage' in the development of Path-Knowledge. One who perceives that cessation of the five aggregates is *nibbāna*, the indestructible, enters Path-Knowledge."

The essence regarding the indestructibility of *nibbāna* lies in the fact that there is no arising of any phenomenon in *nibbāna*; since there is nothing that arises there is nothing to get destroyed.

10 *Pañcakkhandhe* ***ītito*** *passanto anulomikakhantim*

patilabhati. Pañcannam khandhānam nirodho anītikam

nibbānti passanto sammattaniyāmam okkamati.

"Realizing that the five aggregates are calamitous, one attains to 'conformity stage' in the development of Path-Knowledge. One who perceives that cessation of the five aggregates is *nibbāna*, free from calamity, enters Path-Knowledge."

11. *Pañcakkhandhe* ***upaddavato*** *passanto anulomikakhantim*

patilabhati.Pañcannam khandhānam nirodho anuppadavam

nibbānanti passanto sammattaniyāmam okkamati.

"Realizing that the five aggregates are a bane, one attains to 'conformity stage' in the development of Path-Knowledge. One who perceives that cessation of the five aggregates is *nibbāna*, freedom from bane, enters Path-Knowledge."

12. *Pañcakkhandhe* ***bhayato*** *passanto anulomikakhantim*

pantilabhati. Pañcannam khandhānam nirodho abhayam

nibbānanti passanto sammattaniyāmam okkamati.

"Realizing that the five aggregates are dreadful because of ageing, disease and death, etc., one attains to 'conformity stage' in the development of Path-Knowledge. One who perceives that cessation of the five aggregates is *nibbāna*, unvisited by fear, enters Path-knowledge."

13. *Pañcakkhandhe* ***upasaggato*** *passanto anlomikakhantim*

patilabhati. Pañcannam khandhānam nirodho anupasaggam

nibbānanti passanto sammattaniyāmam okkamati.

"Realizing that the five aggregates are a perpetual affliction, one attains to 'conformity stage' in the development of Path-knowledge. One who perceives that cessation of the five aggregates is *nibbāna*, freedom from affliction, enters Path-knowledge."

14. *Pañcakkhandhe* ***calato*** *passanto anulomikakhantim*

patilabhati. Pañcannam khandhānam nirodho acalam

nibbānanti passanto sammattaniyāmam okkamati.

"Realizing that the five aggregates are shaky, or unstable, one attains to conformity stage' in the development of Path-knowledge. One who perceives that cessation of the five aggregates is *nibbāna* that is stable or imperturbable, enters Path-knowledge."

The five aggregates are shaky in the sense that whenever they are present they are liable to be damaged or ruined in five ways* or to undergo the vicissitudes or worldly *dhamma* circumstances of eight kinds,# Perception or the eye of wisdom, of course, is the result of constant, sustained reflection.

15. *Pancakkhandhe* ***pabhanguto*** *passanto anulomikakhantim*

patilabhati. Pañcannam khandhānam nirodho apabhangu

nibbānanti passanto sammattaniyāmam okkamati.

"Realizing that the five aggregates are fragile being easily destructible through internal or external causes, one attains to 'conformity stage' in the

* 'Ruined in five ways': (*vyasana*): Loss of kinsmen, loss of wealth, loss of health or sickness, loss of morality, loss of faith in the Three Gems.

'Worldly *dhammas* or circumstances of eight kinds': gain, loss; fame, dishonor; praise; blame; happiness, suffering.

development of Path-Knowledge. One who perceives that cessation of the five aggregates is *nibbāna*, the indestructible, enters Path-knowledge."

16. *Pañcakkhandhe* ***addhuvato*** *passanto anulomikakhantim*

patilabhati. Pañcannam khandhānam nirodho dhuvam

nibbānanti passanto sammattaniyāmam okkamati.

"Realizing that the five aggregates are changeable at all times – by way of bodily posture or mental functions – or considered in the light of the six kinds of sense-bases, contacts and feeling – one attains 'conformity stage' in the development of Path-knowledge. One who perceives that cessation of the five aggregates is *nibbāna,* the immovable, the unchangeable, one enters Path-knowledge."

17. *Pañcakkhandhe* ***atānato*** *passanto anulomikakhantim*

patilabhati. Pañcannam khandhānam nirodho tānam

nibbānanti passanto sammattaniyāmam okkamati.

"Realizing that the five aggregates are defenseless, one attains to 'conformity stage' in the development of Path-knowledge. One who perceives that cessation of the five aggregates is *nibbāna*, a perfect defense against ageing, disease and death, one enters Path-knowledge."

18. *Pañcakkhandhe* ***alenato*** *passanto anulomikakhantim*

patilabhati. Pañcannam khandhānam nirodho lenam

nibbānanti passanto sammataniyāmam okkamati.

“Realizing that the five aggregates are not a safe retreat or shelter, one attains to ‘conformity stage’ in the development of Path-knowledge. One who perceives that cessation of the five aggregates is *nibbāna* the safe haven, one enters Path-knowledge.”

19. *Pañcakkhandhe **asaranato** passanto anulomikakhantim*

patilabhati. Pañcuannam khandhānam nirodho saranam

nibbānanti passanto sammattaniyāmam okkamati.

“Realizing that the five aggregates are no refuge, one attains to ‘conformity stage’ in the development of Path-knowledge. One who perceives that cessation of the five aggregates is *nibbāna* the real refuge, one enters Path-knowledge.”

20. *Pañcakkhandhe **rittato** passanto anulomikakhantim*

patilabhati. Pañcannam khandhānam nirodho arittam

nibbānanti passanto sammattaniyāman okkamati.

“Realizing that the five aggregates are just empty, one attains to ‘conformity stage’ in the development of Path-knowledge. One who perceives that cessation of the five aggregates is *nibbāna*, perfection, most substantial, one enters Path-knowledge.”

21. *Pañcakkhandhe **tucchato** passanto anulomikakhantim*

patilabhati. Pañcannam khandhānam nirodho atuccham

nibbānanti passanto sammattaniyāmam okkamati.

“Realizing that the five aggregates are vain and false, one attains to ‘conformity stage’ in the development of Path-knowledge. One who perceives that cessation of the five aggregates is *nibbāna*, the supreme substantiality or reality, one enters Path-Knowledge.”

22. *Pañcakkhandhe **suññato** passanto anulomikakhantim*

patilabhati. Pañcannam khandhānam nirodho paramasuññam

nibbānanti passanto sammattaniyāmam okkamati.

“Realizing that the five aggregates are devoid of any real person or self or life, one attains to ‘conformity stage’ in the development of Path-Knowledge. One who

perceives that cessation of the five aggregates is *nibbāna* the Sublime Void, one enters Path-Knowledge."

Nibbāna is the Sublime Void because it has no trace of the aggregates, has no destination to any form or birth (not going anywhere) and supremely peaceful. *Patisambhidā Magga* mentions twenty-five kinds of void or void ness of which *nibbāna* is supreme.

23. *Pañcakkhandhe **anattato** passanto anulomikakhantim*

patilabhati. Pañcannam khandhānam nirodho paramattam

nibbānanti passanto sammattaniyāmam okkamati.

"Realizing that the five aggregates are unreal, unsubstantial, lacking personality, (*anatta*), one attains to 'conformity stage' in the development of Path-Knowledge. One who perceives that cessation of the five aggregates is *nibbāna*, sublime reality, supremely substantial, enters Path-Knowledge."

24. *Pañcakkhandhe **ādinavato** passanto anulomikakhantim*

patilabhati. Pañcannam khandhānam nirodho ānadinavam

nibbānanti passanto sammattaniyāmam okkamati.

"Realizing that the five aggregates are evil or vicious, one attains to 'conformity stage' in the development of Path-Knowledge. One who perceives that cessation of the five aggregates is the cessation of evil or *nibbāna*, enters Path-Knowledge."

25. *Pañcakkhandhe **viparināmadhammato** passanto anulomikakhantim*

patilabhati. Pañcannam khandhānam nirodho aviparināmadhammam

nibbānti passanto sammattantiyāmam okkamati.

"Realizing that the five aggregates are changeable things, being subject to ageing, disease and death, one attains to 'conformity stage' in the development of Path-Knowledge. One who perceives that cessation of the five aggregates is *nibbāna,* the unchangeable, enters Path-Knowledge."

Nibbāna is unchangeable because there is no conditioned phenomenon that must suffer ageing and death.

26. *Pañcakkhandne **asārakato** passanto anulomikakhantim*

patilabhati. Pañcannam khandhānam nirodho sāram

nibbānati passanto sammattaniyāmam okkamati.

"Realizing that the five aggregates lack essence or substance, one attains to 'conformity stage, in the development of Path-knowledge. One who perceives that cessation of the five aggregates is *nibbāna*, essentially permanent, essentially peaceful and essentially real or substantial, enters Path-Knowledge."

27. *Pañcakkhandhe* ***aghamūlato*** *passanto anulomikakhantim*

patilabhati. Pañcannam khandhānam nirodho anaghamūlam

nibbānanti passanto sammattaniyāmam okkamati.

"Realizing that the five aggregates are the source of all evil, namely, lust, hate and delusion, one attains to 'conformity stage' in the development of Path-Knowledge. One who perceives that cessation of the five aggregates is *nibbāna*, unconnected with any evil, enters Path-knowledge."

28. *Pañcakkhandhe* ***vadakato*** *passanto anulomikakhantim*

patilabahti. Pañcannam khandhānam nirodho avadhakam

nibbananti passanto sammattaniyāmam okkamati.

"Realizing that the five aggregates are killers, one attains to 'conformity stage' in the development of Path-Knowledge. One who perceives that cessation of the five aggregate is reaching *nibbāna*, the safe haven, devoid of killers, enters Path-Knowledge."

29. *Pañcakkhandhe* ***vibhavato*** *passanto anulomikahantim*

patilabhati. Pancannam khandhānam nirodho avibhavam

nibbananti passanto sammattaniyāmam okkamati.

"Realizing that the five aggregates land one to any one of the four miserable states, or to the seven fortunate existence or to the twenty Brahma realms, as *kamma* would assign one, one attains to 'conformity stage' in the development of Path-Knowledge. One who perceives that cessation of the five aggregates is non-becoming, *nibbāna*, enters Path-knowledge."

30. *Pañcakkhandhe* ***sāsavato*** *passanto anulomikakhantim*

patilabhati. Pancannam khandhānam nirodho anāsavam

nibbananti passanto sammattaniyāmam okkamati.

“Realizing that the five aggregates are associated with defilements that outflow into the thirty-one form of existence, attains to ‘conformity stage’ in the development of Path-Knowledge. One who perceives that cessation of the five aggregates is *nibbāna* that does not flow out into any form of existence, enters Path-Knowledge.”

31. *Pancakkhandhe **sankhatato** passanto anulomikakhantim*

patilabhati. Pancannam khandhānam nirodho asankahtam

nibbananti psaaanto sammattaniyāmam okkamati.

“Realizing that the five aggregates are conditioned by *kamma*, mind, temperature and nutriment, and are mere phenomena in a state of flux, one attains to ‘conformity stage’ in the development of Path-Knowledge. One who perceives that cessation of the five aggregates is *nibbāna* the unconditioned, enters Path-Knowledge.”

32. *Pancakkhandhe **mārāmisato** passanto anulomikakhantim*

patilabhati. Pancannam khandhānam nirodho nirāmisam

nabbananti passanto sammattaniyāmam okkamati.

“Realizing that the five aggregates are the food of *māra*, death, one attains to Path-Knowledge. One who perceives that cessation of the five aggregates is *nibbāna*, beyond death’s pale, enter Path-Knowledge.”

33. *Pañcakkhandhe **jātidhammato** passanto anulomikakhantim*

patilabhati. Pañcannam khandhānam nirodho ajātam

nibbānanti passanto sammattaniyāmam okkamati.

“Realizing that the five aggregates are being successively reborn, one attains to ‘conformity stage’ in the development of Path-Knowledge. One who perceives that cessation of the five aggregates is birthless *nibbāna*, enters Path-Knowledge.”

34. *Pañcakkhandhe **jarādhammato** passanto anulomikakhantim*

patilabhati. Pañcannam khandhānam nirodho ajaram

nibbānanti passanto sammattaniyāmam okkamati.

“Realizing that the five aggregates are subject to ageing, - - etc.”

*35. Pañcakkhandhe **vyādhidhammato** passanto anulomikakhantim*

patilabhati. Pañcannam khandhānam nirodho avyādhim

nibbanānti passanto sammattaniyāmam okkamati.

"Realizing that the five aggregates are subject to disease, - - - - etc. - -."

36. Pañcakkhandhe ***marana-dhammato*** *passanto anulomikakhantim patilabhati. Pañcannam khandhānam nirodho amatam*

nibbānanti passanto sammattaniyāmam okkamati.

"Realization that the five aggregates are subject to death, etc. - -."

37. Pañcakkhandhe ***sokadhammato*** *passanto anulomikakhantim*

patilabhati. Pañcannam khandhānam nirodho asokam

nibbānanti passato sammattaniyāmam okkamati.

"Realizing that the five aggregates are subject to grief, etc. - - -."

38. Pañcakkhandhe ***paridevadhammato*** *passanto anulomikakhantim*

patilabhati. Pañcannam khandhānam nirodho aparidevam

nibbānanti passanto sammattaniyāmam okkamati.

"Realizing that the five aggregates are subject to lamentation, etc. - - -"

39. Pañcakkhandhe ***upāyāsadhammato*** *passanto anulomikakhantim*

patilabhati. Pañcannam khandhānam nirodho anupayasam

nibbānanti passanto sammattaniyāmam okkamati.

"Realizing that the five aggregates are subject to anguish or despair, etc."

40. *Pañcakkhandhe* ***samkilesikadhammato*** *passanto anulomikakhantim*

natilabhsti. Pañcannam khandhānam nirodho asamkilesikam

nibbānanti passanto sammattaniyāmam okkamati.

"Realizing that the five aggregates are conducive to defilement – that they serve as breeding-ground for craving, wrong view and evil deeds – one attains to 'conformity stage' in the development of Path-Knowledge. One who perceives that

cessation of the five aggregates is *nibbāna*, dissociated with defilements, enters Path-Knowledge."

Some of the Forty Features explained.

In the above forty features, some of the terms, as have been defined in the commentaries, are shown below.

'*Agham'*: Pollution.

Malehi haññateti agham: "That which is liable to be corrupted by lust, hate and delusion, the pollutants or defilements, is called pollution, *agham*". The five aggregates, being so liable, are called pollution.

Iti: Calamity

Sampattinam antare eti: *āgacchatiti īti*; "It has a way of befalling ruinously amidst one's wellbeing, hence it is called calamity, ī*ti*." The five aggregates, being liable to adversity, are therefore calamitous.

Upaddavo: bane

Upagantvā davatīti upaddavo: "That which acts as a thorn in one's side, (lit., 'affects internally'), is called a bane, *upaddavo*."

Upasaggo: Affliction

Upagantvā sajjatīti upasaggo: "That is a source of constant affliction like leprosy; hence it is constant affliction, *upasaggo*."

Tānam: defense, protection.

Tāyati rakkhatiti tānam. Pañcakkhandhā atānā. "That which defends or protects is protection or defence. The Three Gems are one's defence. The five aggregates do not provide any defence.

Lenam: shelter.

Liyanti etthāti lenam. Pañcakkhandhā alenā. "That which offers refuge is shelter: the Three Gems are one's shelter. The five aggregates do not provide any shelter."

Saranam: refuge

Ahite dhamme sarati himsatiti saranam: "Because it destroys the unprofitable things (*dhammas*), it is called refuge, *saranam*. Hence the Three Gems are called the Three Refuges." The five aggregates offer no refuge.

Adīnavo: evil or vicious thing

Bhuso dīnam vahatīti ādīnavo: "Because it is capable of (lit., it 'carries') extreme wretchedness it is called evil or vicious thing, - *ādīnavo*." Hence the five aggregates are evil or vicious things.

Mārāmisa: food of Māra or Death

Mārānam āmisati mārāmisā: "Because it is the food of *Māra*, Death, the five aggregates are Death's food."

Samkilesikā: conducive to defilement.

Taṇhā dithi ducaritam kilesānam hitāti samkilesikā: "Because they are conducive to the arising of such impurities as craving, wrong view and misconduct, the five aggregates are said to be conducive to defilement."

The five aggregates are in fact both caused by, and the cause of, all defilements.

In the ten stages of insight-development, the above mode of contemplation on the forty features of the aggregates constitutes the knowledge of proper contemplation or contemplative knowledge (*patisankhā* ñ*āna*).

It was the object of the Venerable Sariputta, author of *Patisambhidā Magga*, to instill in the mind of the meditator the dual consciousness – the horrors of conditioned existence enumerated in forty ways, side by side with the peace and security of the unconditioned *nibbāna*. The yogi is thus enabled to turn his attention to the truly desirable *nibbāna*, having been disillusioned with the false 'self' that the five aggregates present.

In the above explanations, commentarial arguments have been included in certain passages. They are meant to provide the reader with greater depth of knowledge. The original meaning is in no way affected by the elaborations.

In the present book the main aim is to get a quick grasp of *dukkha* as the fact of existence and the truth about the necessity and desirability of cessation thereof.

To this end the dual method of –

"Arising is *dukkha*, non-arising, cessation, is peace" (*Uppādo dukkham anuppādo sukkam*) is shown. This method, it will be seen, is the basic idea behind the forty features enumerated above. It is the sure way to gain insight into Path-Knowledge.

The forty features are fairly well-known by most readers through other sources. But they usually stand alone. Here they are placed side by side with *nibbāna*, as taught by the Venerable *Sariputta* in *Patisambhidā Magga*. This method of juxtaposition has the effect of vividness. Try it out diligently.

Birth, the root of all woes

All woes or troubles begin with birth. It comes round and round. Only when the process of rebirth is stopped can all woes come to an end. That is why birth is mentioned at the head of *dukkha* by the Buddha. This point has been underlined by the commentary as follows:-

Kim bahum pabhāsitena loke yam kiñci dukkhitam

Tam sabbam jātivihare tenāha sabbapathamam

"What's the good of beating about the bush? Of course there are innumerable woes and troubles besetting the world. But without rebirth (birth) none of them can ever arise. That is why the Buddha mentions birth as the foremost of all woes."

The dual mode of contemplation in plain language is given below:- (A free rendering of the original Myanmar versification)

"If there's birth there's death, that's *dukkha*;

Only if birth ceases, this *dukkha* ends.

Cessation of *dukkha* means *nibbanā* i*s* peace.

Ardent desire for peaceful cessation

Puts one well on the Path.

For cessation,

Meditate on the necessity of ageing and death

That birth entails.

For all mentality and materiality.

That has come into being

Must decay.

Or Meditate

On the impermanence, painfulness and not-self,

The three characters of all existence.

Persistent thoughts on the three characters

Dispel craving for existence.

When craving is out

Rebirth is no more,

And *dukkha* ceases."

He who discerns the truth that craving is responsible for rebirth and attendant troubles will be glad to attain cessation of rebirth. This ardent desire drives out craving. When he is able to do this, he is right on the Path and attains to Stream-entry and higher Path-Knowledge here and now.

Contemplating In Pairs the Fifteen Woes Side By Side with The Fifteen Blessings of *Nibbāna*.

To be dissatisfied with birth and to direct one's attention to its cessation, fifteen pairs of the evils of rebirth and the blessings of *nibbāna* are shown in *Patisambhida Magga*. This method of meditation is called *yuganaddhā* method.

Uppādo dukkham anuppado sukham

Pavattam dukkham apavattam sukham

Nimittam dukkham animittam sukkham

Ayuhanā dukkham anāyūhanā sukkham

Patisandhi dukkham appatisandhi sukkham

Gati dukkham nagati sukham

Nibbatti dukkham nanibbatti sukham

Upapatti dukkham anupapatti sukham

Jāti dukkham ajāti sukham

Jarā dukkham ajarā sukham

Vyādhi dukkham avyādhi sikham

Maranam dukkham amatam sukham

Soko dukkham asoko sukham

Paridevo dukkham aparidevo sukham

Upāyāso dukkham anupāyāso sukham.

Arising of the five aggregates is painful because of the necessity of ageing and death; non-arising of the aggregates is peaceful because there is no decay and death.

Coming into present existence with incessant arising is painful because of incessant dissolutions. Non-appearance of the aggregates is peaceful.

Having the signs or marks of the aggregates is painful; complete absence of any trace of the aggregates is peaceful because it is safe from decay and death.

Endless efforts at good or bad actions are painful. Having no necessity for effort in *nibbāna* is peaceful.

Birth inside the mother's womb is painful (considering the tight, uncomfortable and loathsome compartment to which the embryo is confined for nine long months): birthlessness of *nibbāna* like the total extinction in the case of *arahats* is peaceful, being without a trace on basis for *dukkha.*

Wandering (lit., 'faring') in the five categories (lit., 'courses') of exist-ence viz., the torturous realms (*niryagati*), the hungry beings' existences (*peta gati*), animal existences (*tiricchāna gati*), human existence (*manussa gati*)

And heavenly existences (*deva gati*), is painful because of the necessity of decay and death; non-faring in any of them is peaceful.

Being born from out of moisture (*samsedaja*) is painful because of the necessity of decay and death; not being born at all is peaceful.

Sudden appearance as a full grown male or female (*upapattika*) is painful because of the necessity of decay and death; non-appearance as any being is peaceful.

Rebirth in a fresh existence is painful. Not being born afresh is peaceful.

Ageing is painful; having no basis for ageing is peaceful.

Disease is painful; having no basis for disease is peaceful.

Death in a bewildered state is painful; having no basis to undergo death is peaceful.

Grief is painful; having no ground for grief is peaceful.

Lamentation is painful; having no ground for lamentation is peaceful.

Anguish is painful; having no ground for anguish is peaceful.

When one can gain sufficient insight to discern the opposing natures of what is painful or evil and what is peaceful or perfect happiness, craving for existence dies a natural death. At the beginning defilements (such as craving) become extinct during moments of dwelling on the subject of such meditation. After persistent development of this thought of non-craving, the defilements are ultimately rooted out forever.

It may be mentioned here that all the forty features need not be meditated upon, for if you have grasped any one of them you can gain sufficient insight into Path-knowledge.

The Fifteen Pairs of *Dukkha* and *Nibbāna* Juxtaposed.

To quote *Patisambhidā Magga* again:-

Uppādo sankhārā anuppādo nibbānam.

Pavattam sankhārā appavattam nibbānam.

Nimittam sankhārā animittam nibbānam

Ayūhanā sankhārā anāyuhanā nibbānam.

Patisandhi sankhārā appatisandhi nibbānam

Gati sankhārā nagati nibbānam.

Nibbatti sankhārā nanibbātti nibbānam

Upapatti sankhārā anupapatti nibbānam.

Jāti sankhārā ajāti nibbānam.

Jara sankhārā ajāra nibbānam.

Vyādhi sankhārā avyādhi nibbānam.

Maranam sankhārā amatam nibbānam.

Soko sankhārā asoko nibbānam.

Paridevo sankhārā apridevo nibbānam.

Upāyāso sankhārā anupāyaso nibbānam.

Arising of the five aggregates is conditioned existence subject to rise and fall, and conditioned by kamma, mind, temperature and nutriment; non-arising of the five aggregates is *nibbāna* the unconditioned.

Coming into present existence is conditioned; non-appearance of the aggregates is *nibbāna* the unconditioned.

Having the marks of aggregates is conditioned; absence of any mark of existence is *nibbāna* the unconditioned.

Endless efforts at good or bad actions are conditioned; having no necessity for effort is *nibbāna*.

Birth inside the womb is conditioned; birthlessness is *nibbana*.

Faring in the various forms of existence is conditioned; non-faring is *nibbāna*.

Being born from out of moisture (*samsedaja*) is conditioned; not being born at all *nibbāna*.

Sudden appearance as a full – grown male or female is conditioned; non-appearance as any being is *nibbāna*.

Rebirth is conditioned; not taking fresh existence is *nibbāna*.

Ageing is conditioned; having no basis for ageing is *nibbāna*.

Disease is conditioned; having no basis for disease is *nibbāna*.

Death is conditioned; deathlessness is *nibbāna*.

Grief is conditioned; having no ground for grief is *nibbāna*.

Lamentation is conditioned; having no ground for lamentation is *nibbāna*.

Anguish is conditioned; having no ground for anguish is *nibbāna*.

Contemplating the Voidness of the Five Aggregates, etc.,

Their Soullessness, in Six Ways.

That all conditioned things are devoid of any living entity or soul may be contemplated on in the following six ways:-

> *Cakkhu suñña rūpāsuññā mano suñño dhammā suññā cakkhuviññānam suññam cakkhu samphasso suñño cakkhusampassajā vedanā suññā taṇhāssuññā upādānam suññām bhavo suñño jāti suñña maranam suññam attenavā attaniyena vā aniccena vā dhuvena vā sassatena vā avipari nāmadhammena vāti cha suññāni datthabbāni.*
>
> - *VisuddhiMagga*, XI.

That is in respect of the eye. For the remaining five sense-organs too similar contemplation may be made.

The eye is devoid of life or soul. Eye-object, i.e., visual-object is devoid of life or soul; the mind, i.e., the consciousness, (*bhavanga*) is devoid of life and soul. The mind that turns towards its object, i.e., the perceptive consciousness, (*āvajjana*), is devoid of life or soul. Eye-consciousness is devoid of life or soul. Feeling derived from (lit., 'born of') eye-contact is devoid of life or soul. Craving* is devoid of life or soul. Clinging is devoid of life or soul. Becoming is devoid of life or soul. Birth (rebirth) is devoid of life or soul. Ageing is devoid of life or soul. Death is devoid of life or soul; i.e., it is not a life that dies but only mind-matter complex that undergoes decay and dissolution. There is in any of the conditioned things neither self (*atta*) that anyone may safely identify with him or her; nor as one's own, nor as being changeless (i.e., without renewed arising); nor as being permanent or

unchanging; or as being eternal; nor as being un-decaying or un-corruption. In these six ways should the void ness of conditioned things may be contemplated on.

Contemplating On the Voidness Of the Five Aggregates,

Their Soullessness, In Twelve Ways.

The twelve ultimate facts about the five aggregates may also be contemplated on in those twelve ways:-

Rūpam na satto na jīvo na naro na māṇavo

na itthi na puriso na atta na attaniyam nā ham

na mama na aññassa na kassaci. Atha kho

rūpakkhandhameva hotīti. - Ibid. (See also *Cūlaniddesa*.)

Material form is not a being; it is insensate and devoid of life. It is not a living thing: it lacks any life force. It is not a man. It is not a youth. It is not a female. It is not a male. It is not a self. It is not anyone's property. It is not I. It

* 'Craving' here means craving consequent to feeling arising out of eye-contact.

is not mine. It is not another one. It is not any one. In truth and reality it is mere aggregates of matter.

This is how material form or physical phenomena may be contemplated on.

Regarding the four other aggregates – feeling, perception, mental formations and consciousness – also the same twelve facts may be contemplated on.

Perceiving the Void- ness or Emptiness, the *Yogi* Develops

A Complete Equanimity Towards All Conditioned Things.

The development of equanimity, *sankharupekkhā ñāna*, follows, as deseribed in *Visuddhi Magga*:-

> *Evam suññato disvā tilakkhanam āropetva sankhāresu pariggaṇhanto bhayañca nandiñca vippahāya sabbasankhāresu udāsino ahosi majjhatto ahanti vā mamanti vā nagaṇhāti vissatthabhariyo viya puriso hoti.*

"One who, having perceived the void-ness or emptiness of all conditioned things, turns his attention to the three characteristics thereof, and comprehends them, rejects any fear about losing through decay of the conditioned things, or any pleasure that may come of them. He now is unconcerned at all, being able to take them indifferently in a neutral attitude. He does not take them as himself or his property. His indifference may be likened to a man who, having divorced his wife, is in no way affected by the good or bad circumstances the woman may be undergoing."

This wisdom called equanimity is also stated otherwise:-

patisankhāradhamesu bhayanandīvivajjanavasena

pavattam ñānam sankhārupekkhā nāma hoti.

"The wisdom that comes of a rejection of both fear and favour relating to all conditioned things (as in one who has trained his mind on the forty features thereof and grasped their three characteristics), is called the wisdom of equanimity, *sankhārupekkhā ñāna*."

It may be mentioned that the wisdom (or knowledge) of equanimity and the 'knowledge in conformity with Path-Knowledge', *anuloma ñāna*, together are sometimes referred to as the 'knowledge leading to the Path', *vutthāna gāminī*. This stage marks insight-development of a decisive character that is just about to leave behind the deluded worldling's view and enter the noble stream of the Path. The two insights together are accordingly known as *vutthāngāmini vipassanā* (*ñāna*).*

* *Vutthāna*: to stand, to fix, to rest; lit., 'thorough settling down'; *gāmini*: way,

Since the maturity of this knowledge (*vitthānagāminī*) is the requisite purity of mind for Path-knowledge it is also called *Patipadā* ñānadassana *visuddhi*, 'Purification by Insight-knowledge of the Way.

‘Purity of Vision’, *Nānadassana visuddhi.*

Purity of vision, *ñānadassana visuddhi*, is briefly stated thus:-

Sotāpattimaggo sakadāgāmimaggo anāgāmi maggo arahattamaggo ti imesu pana catūsu maggesu ñānam ñānadassanavisuddhi nāma.

“Path of Stream-entry, path of Once-returned, path of Non-returned, Path of Arahatship-, now the respective knowledge in each of these four Paths is called purity of vision, ñ*ānadassana visuddhi*.”

The Three Aspects of Release (*vimokkha*)

One enters Path-Knowledge through attaining release or *vimokkhha* in the following three manners or aspects:-

Ayam pana maggo aniccanupassanāya ghanavinibbhogam katvā niccanimitta dhuvanimitta sassatanimittam pahāya āgato. Tasmā animitto vimokkhoti vuccati.

“Further, this path (Knowledge), having resolved all mentality-and-materiality into elements through insight into their impermanent character, comes of a rejection of any trace or sign of stability, (*nicca*) durability (*dūva*) or permanence (*sassata*). Hence it is called ‘release through the signless’, *animitta vimokkha*.”

Any mark or sign of the aggregates necessarily implies decay and death which is *dukkha*. When all trace of the aggregates disappear in *nibbāna*, no occasion for decay and death remains. Hence it is release from *dukkha*. The ardent desire for such absence of any mark of the aggregates is the consciousness with *nibbāna* as its (sole) object. This is Path-consciousness. This is also to be understood as cessation of craving, *taṇhā nirodha*.

Ayam pana dukkhānupassanāya sukhasaññam pahāya panidhim pattha nam sukkhāpetvā āgato. Tasmā appanihito vimokkhoti vuccati.

“Now, about release through passionlessness. This Path (Knowledge), having rejected any concept about the pleasurability of all mental-and-material phenomena through insight into their woefulness (*dukkha*), comes of an exhaustion of (lit., *sukkhāpetvā*, having dried up), any wish for pleasure. Hence it is called ‘release through passionlessness,’ *apanīhita vimokkha*.”

The presence of the aggregates means the presence of *dukkha* through instability and corruption. With their absence no *dukkha* remains. In such case there is no need to aspire or wish for pleasure. The consciousness of this absence of desire for any pleasure is the consciousness as *nibbāna* as its object. This is Path-consciousness. Passionlessness is an epithet for *nibbāna*. This is also to be understood as cessation of craving.

Ayam pana maggo anattānuppassanāya atta satta puggala saññam pahāya sankhāresu suññam passato āgato. Tasmā suññato vimokkhoti vuccati.

"Now, about release through voidness. This Path-Knowledge, having rejected through insight, any mistaken beliefs in a soul or self or person in regard to the five aggregates, comes of discernment of void-ness in all conditioned things. Hence it is called 'release through void-ness,' *suññatavimokkha*."

Here also one's consciousness is fixed on the voidness, i.e., the absence of conditioned phenomena, of *nibbāna*. This is Path-consciousness. This is also to be understood as cessation of craving.

Thus it will be seen that all the three *vimokkhas* have the common denominator in cessation of craving for existence, and an inclination to the peace of birthlessness that is *nibbāna*.

Plunging Into the Supramundane, *Gotrabhu*.

Now the plunging into the Supramundane Knowledge, *Gotrabhu*, will be explained.

Thula thule saccapaticchādake tamamhi antaradhāpite sabbasankhā ragatesu sittam napakkhandati na titthati nādhimuccati na sajjati na laggati na bajjhati padumapalāsato udakabhinduviya pasikutati. Patilīyati pativivattati sabbam nimittārammanampi palibodhato upatthāti atthassa tasmim palibo dhato upatthite anulomañānassa āsevanante animittam appavattam visankhā ram nirodham nibbānam ārammanam kurumānam putthujjanagottam puthujja nasankham puthujjanabhūmim atikkamamānam ariyagottam ariyasankham ariya bhūmim okkamamānam nibbānārammane pathamāvattana pathamā boga pathamasamannāhārabhūtam maggassa anantara āsevana upanissaya natthi vigatavasena chahākārehi paccayabhūtam sikhāpattavipassanāya muddhabhūtam apunarāvattakam uppajjati gotrabhuñānam.

-*VisuddhiMagga*, Vol. II, P. 312.

"Having thus dispelled the gross ignorance shrouding the Four Noble Truths, the *bhikkhu's* consciousness does not rejoice in (lit., *pakkhandati*, 'to spring forward') does not rest on, does not incline to, does not cling to, does not adhere to, all conditioned things, and thereby is not imprisoned by them. It is just like the drop of water that lets loose itself from the surface of the lotus-leaf. The mind shrinks from them, shies away from them, turn its back on them. All hindrances to Path-knowledge are now clearly seen (become obvious) as great burdens. At that critical thought-moment, thanks to the maturity of the persistent knowledge that conforms to Path-knowledge (*anuloma ñāna*), the *bhikkhu's* consciousness is squarely directed towards (lit., *kurumānam*, 'formed upon', 'set upon') *nibbāna* the signless, the non-becoming, the unconditioned, the cessation of conditionality. That is the instance when the *bhikkhu's* consciousness lets him surpass the lineage of worldling (*puthujjana*), takes him out of the numbers of worldling and lifts him from worldling's level or status, and sends him up to the Noble lineage of the *ariyā*, adds him into the numbers of *ariyās*, and elevates him to *ariyā* status. It is then that the consciousness, dwelling for the first time on *nibbāna* as its object, getting a start in *nibbāna*, musing on *nibbāna* for the first time, receiving *nibbāna* for the first time, and thanks to the six-fold contributing conditions – namely: proximity (*anantara*), contiguity (*samanantara*), frequency (*āsevana*), decisive support (*upanissaya*), absence (*natthi*), disappearance (*vigata*) – the Knowledge plunging into the supramundane or *Gotrabhū* ñā*na*, the acme or zenith of the Path-practice and the irreversible Path-Knowledge, flashes onto it (lit., *uppajjati*, 'arises')."

Some Definitions of *Gotrabhu*

Uppādam abhibhuyyatīti gotrabhu.

Anuppādam nibbānam pakkhandatīti gotrabhu.

- *Patisambhidā Magga*

"It overwhelms the desire for arising (of fresh existence), hence it is called *gotrabhu*."

"It springs forward to non-arising, the cessation or *nibbāna,* hence it is called *gotrabhu*."

Pavattam abhibhuyyatīti gotrabhu

Appavattam nibbānam pakkhandatīti gotrabhu

- Ibid.

The meaning is the same an above.

Animittam nibbānam pakkhandatīti gotrabhu,

"It overwhelms the marks of conditioned phenomena, hence it is called *gotrabhu.*"

"It springs forward to the sign less, *nibbāna*, hence it is called *gotrabhu*."

Ayūhanam abhibhuyyatīti gotrabhu,

Anāyūhanam nibbānam pakkhandatīti gotrabhu

"It surpasses the rebirth-producing efforts, whether good or bad; hence it is called *gotrabhu*."

It springs forward to the tranquillity of *nibbāna*, hence it is called *gotrabhu*."

Patisandhim abhibhuyyatīti gotrabhu.

Appatisandhim nibbānam pakkhandatīti gotrabhu.

"It surpasses rebirth, hence it is called *gotrabhu*." "It springs forwards to birth less *nibbāna* as refuge, hence it is called *gotrabhu*."

Gatim abhibhuyyatīti gotrabhu.

Na gatim nibbānam pakkkhandatīti gotrabhu.

"It surpasses faring in the five categories of existence, hence it is called *gotrabhu*."

"It springs forward to the calmness and fixity of nibbāna, hence it is called *gotrabhu*."

Nibbattim abhibhuyyatīti gotrabhu.

Na nibbattim nibbānam pakkhandatīti gotrabhu.

"It overwhelms the necessity of fresh becoming of *nibbāna*, hence it is called *gotrabhu*."

“It springs forward to the non-becoming of *nibbāna*, hence it is called *gotrabhu.”*

Upapattim abhibhuyyatīti gotrabhu.

Anupapattim nibbānam pakkhandatīti gotrabhu.

“It surpasses birth by sudden full-grown appearance, hence it is called *gotrabhu*.”

“It springs forward to birthless *nibbāna*, hence it is called *gotrabhu*.”

Jātim abhibhuyyatīti gotrabhu.

Ajātim nibbānam pakkhandatīti gotrabhu.

“It surpasses fresh existence or rebirth, hence it is called *gotrabhu*.” “It springs forward to *nibbāna*, extinction of fresh existence; hence it is called *gotrabhu*.”

**Jaram:* Ageing

Jaram abhibhuyyatiti gotrabhu. Ajaram nibbānam pakkhandatīti gotrabhu.

**Vyādim:* Disease

Vyādim abhibhuyyatīti gotrabhu. Avyādim nibbānam pakkhandatīti gotrabhu.

**Maranam*: Death

Maranam abhibbhuyyatīti gotrabhu:

Amatam nibbānam pakkhandatiti gotrabhu.

**Sokam*: Grief

Sokam abhibhuyyatīti gotrabhu. Asokam nibbānam pakkhandatīti gotrabhu.

**Paridevam*: Lamentation

Paridevam abhibhuyyatiti gotrabhu. Apridevam nibbānam, pakkhandatīti gotrabhu.

**Upāyāsam*: Anguish

Upāyāsam abhibbhuyyatiti gotrabhu. Anupāyāsam nibbānam pakkhan datīti gotrabhu.

Upāyasām abhibbhuyyatiti gotrabhu. Anupāyasām nibbānam pakkhan datiti gotrabhu.

* Please get the meanings as per above renderings.

Even though there are those fifteen pairs of *dukkha* and *nibbāna* juxtaposed, any one of them, if firmly grasped, can lead to *Gotrabhu*-knowledge. e.g., if non - arising (*anuppādam*) be one's object of meditation that by itself is sufficient.

It may be more particularly stated that *gotrabhu* is the mundane consciousness of great potentiality, *mahākusala citta* that inclines to *nibbāna*. It belongs to momentary thought-process that keeps the defilements at bay. Complete rejection or uprooting the defilements is possible only through Path-consciousness. Moreover, *Gotrabhu*, while dwelling on *nibbāna*, emerges from or surpasses conditionality (*sankhāra nimittam*) but it cannot cut the practising person off the process or stream of being (*pavatta*). Path-consciousness, on the other hand, has the effect of both severing the bonds of conditionality and of the stream of being. Accordingly it exhausts the misbelief that is present in the four types of consciousness, rooted in greed, accompanied by wrong view (*ditthigata sampayutta citta*). It also exhausts doubt, *vicikicchā*. In short, a *sotāpanna* has rooted out blind craving and doubts about the Noble Truth.

The Five Aggregates Compared To A She-demon

Under Human Disguise Whom One Got Wedded.

The commentator at this point illustrates the dreadfulness of the five aggregates and the safety of *nibbāna* by the following simile:-

Eko kīra puriso yakkhiniyā saddhim samvāsa kappesi. Sarattiyābhāge sutto ayanti mantvā āmakusānam gantvā manussamamsam khādati. So kuhim esā gacchatīti anubandhitvā manussamamsam khādamānam disvā tassā amanu ssikabhavam ñatvā yāva mam nakhādati tāva palāyissāmīti bhīto vegena palāyitvā khemathāne atthāsi. Tattha yakkhiniyā saddhim. Samvāso viya khandhānam aham mamāti gahanam susāne manussa-mamsam khadamānam disvā yakkhinīayanti jananamviya khandhānam tilakkhanam disvā anīccādibhāva jānannam bhītakāloviya bhayatupatthānam palāyitukāmatāviya muñcitu kamyatā. Susāna vijahanamviya gottrabhu. Vegenapalāyanamviya maggo. Abhayadese thānam viya phalam.

- *VisuddhiMagga*

“As the story goes, a certain man took a she-demon (under human disguise) as wife. By night the demon, being sure that the husband was asleep, went to the burial ground and devoured human corpses. The husband followed her tracks and saw her eating the human corpses. He then knows that his beloved wife was a demon. “Some day, she’s not going to spare me;” he mused and fled in hot haste, not stopping until he reached a safe spot. In this story, the five aggregates which one happens to be born into, cherished as ‘myself’, ‘my own’, should be regarded as the wedlock of the man with the demon. The direct knowledge of the true character of the demon when she was found eating human flesh is understood as the insight into the three characteristics such as impermanence, etc., that are inherent in the aggregates. The consternation experienced by the man should be likened to the dread that the *bhikkhu* now experiences in respect of the five aggregates. Just as the man saw clearly that he must waste no time in getting rid of the demon, so also the urgency to get to safety (*nibbāna*) should be understood. The knowledge of the necessity of fleeing from the burial ground (where the demon was present), should be compared to *gotrabhuñāna*, the hot haste in which he fled towards safety should be compared to the *magga ñāna* or Path-knowledge; and the safety that the man found should be understood as the safety of the Fruition-knowledge.”

The moral of the story is that one who had been under mistaken belief that the five aggregates were his own self, his property, discovers through insight that they are impermanent, ill and not-self, and therefore craving for existence becomes exhausted there and then.

Tassa dāni maggo uppajjīsatīti sankharupekkhā sankhāre aniccāti va dukkhāti vā anattāti vā sammasitvā bhavangam ottrati bhavangānantaram sankhārupekkhāya katanayeneva sankhāre aniccāti vā dukkhāti vā anattāti vā ārammanam kurumānam uppajjati manodvāravijjanam. Tato bhavangam avattitavā uppanassa tassa kriyacittassānantaram avīcikam cittasantatim anuppabandhāmanam tatheva sankhāre ārammanam katvā upajjati patham javanacittam. Yam parikammanti vuccati tadanantaram tatheva sankhāre ārammanam katvā upajjati dutiyajavanacittam. Yam upacāranti vuccati. Tadanantrampi tatheva sankhāre ārammanam katvā uppajjati tatiyajavana cittam. Yam anulomanti vuccati. Idham n’esam pātiyekkam nāmam.

Avisesana pana tividhammetam asevananti pi parikammanti pi upaca ranti pi anulomanti pi vattum vattati.

- Ibid.

“Now Path-knowledge is about to flash on the *bhikkhu’s* consciousness. By this it is meant that the knowledge of the impermanence, painfulness and unreality

and insubstantiality of all conditioned things, and a complete detachment from them, (*sankhārupekkha ñāna*) descends on the life-continuum or *bhavanga*. Beyond that (i.e., the consciousness of *bhavanga*), the mind-door adverting (*manodvāravajjana*), in like manner i.e., reflecting – as the *sankhāruppakha* ñā*na* had done – on the impermanence, painfulness and unreality of all conditioned things, arises. Then comes the thought-moment of *bhavanga* after which *kriyā citta* arises, and after that, without any break in the thought-process, the first *jāvana* thought-moment, reflecting on the self-same thought-object of the three characteristics of conditioned things, arises. This consciousness or thought-moment is called *parikamma*, the preparedness or readiness (for Path-Knowledge). After that, reflecting on the three-characteristics again, the second *jāvana* thought-movement arises. This consciousness or thought-moment is called *upacāra*, the approach or entrance. After that, the third *javana* thought-moment, in the same manner of reflecting, arises. This consciousness or thought-moment is called *anuloma*, the conformity-stage, since it arises in conformity with the previous thought-moments and the following (*gotrabhu*) thought-moment, and also because it conforms to the Path-knowledge. These, then, are the respective terms for the thought-moments (leading to *gotrabhu*).

In a more general way it may be said that the threefold *javana* is called *āsevana*, 'frequency', or *parikamma*, 'preparatory'; or *upacāra*, 'proximity' or 'entrance'; or *anuloma*, 'conformity'.

The Thought-process At The Moment Of Stream-entry

Maggañānassa gotrabhuñānena diññāsannaya amuñcitvāva nibbānam ārammanam katvā anibbiddhapubbānam apadālitapubbānam lobha dosa mohakkhandhānam nibbijjhana padālanam.

Na kevalañca esa maggo lobhakkhandhādīnam nibbijjhanam'eva karoti. Api ca kho anamataggasamsāra vattadukkhasamuddam soseti. Sabba apyāyadvārāni pidahati. Sattannam ariyadhanānam sammukkhībhāvam karoti. Atthangikamicchāmaggam pajahati. Sabbaverabhāyani vupassameti. Sammasambuddhassa orasaputtabhāvam upaneti. Aññesañja anekassatānam ānisamsānam patilā bhaya samvattatīti evam anekānisamsa dāyakena sotāpattimaggena sampayuttam ñānam sotāpatti maggañānanti vuccati. Pathama magga ñānam nitthitam.

- Ibid.

"Holding fast to (lit., *amuñcitvava*, 'not letting go') the knowledge propelled (lit., *dinnasaññāya*, 'been given') by *gotrabhu* ñā*na* in the direction of Path-knowledge (*maggañāna*), the Path-knowledge with *nibbāna*, the un-born

(birthlessness) as its object, pierces and bursts open – as has never been done before – the masses of greed, hate and delusion.

"Nay, it also causes to dry up the infinite ocean of *samsara*; closes all doors leading to the (four) miserable states of *apāya*: it causes the seven virtues (intrinsic faith or confidence in the Truth, *saddhā*; mindfulness *sati*; moral shame or conscience, *hiri*; moral dread of rebirth, *ottappa*; learnedness, *bahusacca*; diligence, *vīriya*; knowledge discerning the three characteristics, *paññā*) pertaining to the Noble Ones (*ariyās*) to appear vividly (lit., *sammukhībhāvam*, 'to become face to face with'); it discards the eight ways (wrong understanding (view), wrong thoughts, wrong speech, wrong deeds, wrong livelihood, wrong efforts, wrong mindfulness, wrong concentration); it puts out all fears and enemies; it confers upon him the status of the true son of the All-knowing One, the Buddha; and brings innumerable other blessings too. The Knowledge that is associated with Path-consciousness of Stream-entry, *sotapatti magga*, is called Knowledge of Stream-entry, *sotāpattimaggañāna*. Thus ends the First Path-knowledge."

Since the First Path-knowledge is crucial to enlightenment, much elaboration with the textual and commentarial references has been made. For insight into the Truth is a matter of rejecting the wrong views. (*dassana pahātābba*). As for the higher three path-knowledge it only remains to develop the insight already gained – *bhāvanāpahātābba*, rejecting the remaining *kilesās* through the development of the practice. Hence much elaboration is not called for.

Two Kinds Of Comprehending the Four Noble Truths:

Knowledge Through Learning And Knowledge By Insight.

The two kinds of comprehending the four Noble Truths are differentiated in the following way in the commentary:-

- Visuddhi Magga

Duvidhañca saccañānam anubodhañānañca pativedhananca. Tattha anubodhañānam lokiyam anussavādivasena nirodhe magge ca pavattati. Pativedhañānam lokottaram nirodham ārammanan katvā kiccato cattari saccāni pativijjhati. Yathāha yo bhikkhave dukkham passati. Dukkhasamuda yampi so passati. Dukkhanirodhampi passati. Dukkhanirodhagāminipatipadām pi passatiti sabbam vattabbam. - Ibid.

"Knowledge of the Four Noble Truths is of two kinds, namely: comprehending knowledge (*anubodhañāna*) of what has been taught by another (by virtue of

mundane consciouness of great merit associated with knowledge, *lokī mahā kusala ñānasampayutta*), and insight-knowledge (*pativedha ñāna*) that penetrates the Path-knowledge in its fourfold function.* The former is the product of such knowledge as has been acquired from outside sources on cessation and *nibbāna*. Accordingly, it is still at the mundane level. The latter, on the other hand, is supramundane knowledge that penetratingly knows the Four Noble Truths. Right Understanding of the path-knowledge keeps *nibbāna*, the un-born, the non-becoming, the non-arising, the unconditioned, as its object, and the path-consciousness achieves its requisite function of penetrating the Four Noble Truths. On this point the Buddha has said: '*Bhikkhus*, he discerns that to become an *ariyā* he needs to know all conditioned things as being dukkha; that he needs to abandon craving, the origin of *dukkha*: that he needs to realize (through insight) or 'come face to face with' cessation of *dukkha*, i.e., the non-arising, birthless, unconditioned *nibbāna*; that he needs to develop the eightfold Noble path beginning with Right Understanding.' By winning the Path is meant the fulfilling of all those four requisite functions."

* 'The fourfold function': Knowing the Truth of *dukkha*; abandoning *dukkha's* origin, craving; cessation of craving and developing the supramundane Path-knowledge.

The Moment Stream-entry Is Attained,

the Eight-fold Wrong Way Is Abandoned.

On attaining Stream-entry the *bhikkhu* abandons the eightfold wrong way and accomplishes the eightfold Noble path, as described in the Commentary: -

Sotāpatti maggakkhane dassanatthāna sammāditthi micchāditthiyā vuttāti tadanuvattaka kilesehi ca khandhehi ca vutthāti bahiddhā ca sabbanimittehi vuttāti.

Sotāpattimaggakkhane nikkhammatthona sammā sankappā vutthati tadanu vattakakileshi ca khadehica vutthāti bhiddhā ca sabbanimittehi vutthāti.*

Sotāpattimaggakkhane pariggatthena sammā vācā micchavacaya vatthāti tadanuvattakilesehi ca khandhehi ca vutthati, bahiddhā ca sabbani mittechi vutthāti.

Sotāpattimaggakkhane samutthānatthena sammākammanlo micohakam manto vutthati tadanuvattakakilesehi ca khandhehi ca vutthāti. Bhiddhā ca sabbanimittehi vutthāti.

Sotāpattimaggakkhane vodanatthena samumāājīvo micchā ājiva vuthāti tadanuvattakakilesehi ca khandhehi ca vutthate bahiddha ca sabbani mittehi vutthāti.

Sotāpattimaggakhane paggahatthena samumavayamo uncchavayamā vutthāti. (etc.)

Sotāpattimaggakkhane upatthanatthena sammadati michcchasatiya vutthāti, (etc.).

Sotāpattimaggakkhene avikkhepanatthena sammā samādhi micchasā mādhito vutthāti, (etc.).

- *Patisambhidā Magga*

The gist of the above passage is: when Stream-entry is attained to, one is firmly established in the eightfold Noble Path constituted by Right Understanding, Right Thoughts (Thinking), Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Efforts, Right Mindfulness, Right Concentration; this means one for ever turns one's back on wrong views, wrong thoughts, etc., the eight opposite ways.

The Path-Knowledge In the Mundane And the Supramundane Stages.

Path-Knowledge is of two types – mundane, *lokī magga* and supramundane, *lokuttara magga*.

Maggoti lokkiya lokuttaravasena duvidham hoti. Tattha lokiyacitta sampayuttam maggam lokiyam. Lokuttaracitta sampayuttam lokuttaranti.

"In this term' Path (Knowledge)' *maggo*, two meanings are implied: the

* *abhiniropanatthena* (Sixth Council edn.)

mundane *lokiya* and the supramundane or *lokkuttara*. The former is insight which is the outcome of mundane consciousness of great or sublime types associated with knowledge. The latter is consciousness of the supramundane or *lokuttara* which is the true Path-Knowledge (of the eight constituents)."

Lokuttara magga is, in brief, the conscious thought-moment when the four Path-knowledges stand as objects of thought. The consciousnesses that are associated with the mundane thought-objects belong to the mundane Path-knowledge, or *lokiya magga*, (of the eight constituents). The difference is this: the former accomplishes the four requisite functions of Path-Knowledge (see p. 229 *ante*), while the latter does not.

For instance, a Stream-winner works for the higher enlightenment of Once-returner, *sakadāgāmin* relying on the mundane consciousness of sublime type, and only after persistent reliance thereon the Supramundane consciousness of *sakadāgāmi magga* flashes in.

Stream-entry Puts An End To the Five Aggregates

Both Present And Future.

Stream-entry overcomes the process of the arising of the aggregates both in respect of the present and the future. The commentary puts it as follows:-

Sotāpattimaggena cattāri ditthigatasampayutta cittāni vicikicchā sahagatañca imāni pañca cittani pahīyanti. Tāni pañcacittañi rūpam samutthā-peti ayam anupādinnakararāpakkhandho tāni pañca cittāni viññānakkhandho tam sampayutta vedanā vedanākkhandho sañña saññākkhandho sankhārā sankhārakkhandhoti. Sace sotāpannassa sotāpattimaggo abhāvito abhavissa tāni pañca cittāni chasu ārammanesu pariyutthānam pāpuṇeyyum. Nesam pāriyutthāna uppativārayamāne anupadinnakato vutthāti nāma.

"By dint of the eradication of the four greed-rooted types of consciousness associated with wrong view, (*lobha mūlaka ditthigatasampayutta cittam*) and doubt (*vicikicchā*), Stream-entry Knowledge (*sotāpatti magga*) precludes fresh arising of the aggregates.

Unless *satāpatti magga* has been developed, one is prone to those five types of consciousness which render one attached to the sensual world as 'my own', 'my property', etc. Hence *sotāpattimagga* prevents the fresh arising of *kamma* that have the potential for rebirth. Not only in regard to the present existence it also prevents fresh kammically-acquired aggregates from arising after the seventh successive becoming at the most."

This point has been explained in the commentary as follows:-

Sace sotāpannassa sotāpattimaggo abhāvito abhavissa thapetvā sattabhave anamatagge samsāre upādinnakam pavatteyya. Kāsmā tassa nibbattihetuno atthitāya. Tīnisamyojanani ditthānusayo vicikicchanusayoti ime pañcakilesā sotāpattimaggo uppajjamānova samugghāteti. Idāni kuto thapetvā

sattabhave anamatagge samsāre upājjamanova pavassati. Evam maggañānam upādinnakapavattam appavattam kurumāno upādinnakato vutthati nāma.

The gist of the above passage is: when once *sotāpatti magga* is developed, the five defilements, namely: ego-centric views or personality-belief (*sakkāyaditthi*), doubt (*vicikicchā*), blind reliance on conduct and rituals (sīlappataparamasa), wrong-view-potentials or proclivities (*ditthānusaya*) and doubt-potentials or proclivities (*vicikicchānusaya*) that tend to rebirth, the conditions for rebirth beyond the seventh existence at the most, are wiped off. Hence *sotāpattimagga* is said to overcome rebirth both in respect of the present five aggregates and future aggregates.

That being so, Stream-entrance has the effect of overcoming the four *marās* or killers, namely: defilements (*kilesā*), aggregates (*khandha*), death (*maccu*) and kammic potential (*abhisañkhāra*), the last one conquerable within seven further fortunate existence – besides preclusion from the four miserable states right from now.

The Path-Knowledge of Stream-entry roots out latent defilements that defy the three time-concepts.

How Stream-entry roots out latent tendencies that defile the mind at all times is shown as below:-

Pañcakkhandhā vipassanāyabhumi nāma. Yattha atitā vā anāgatāvā paccouppannāvā vattabbā tattha anusayakilesā atītā vā anāgatāvā paccuppannā vā navattabbā tam maggo pahīyati. Yathā taruno rukkho ajātaphalo tamenam puriso mūlam chindeyya ye tassa rukkhassa ajātaphalā te ajātāyeve na jāyanti. Evam'eva uppādo hetu uppādo paccayo kilesānam nibbattiyāti uppāde ādīnavam disvā anuppāde cittam pakkhandati anuppāde cittassa pakkhandattā ye āyuhanapaccayā kilesānibbatteyyum te ajātāyeva na jāyanti. Anibbattāyeva na nibbattanti apātubhūtāyeva na pātubhāvanti atthi maggabhavāna atthi phalasacchikiriyā atthi kilesappahānam atthi dhammābhisama-yoti.

- *VisuddhiMagga*

"The five aggregates belong to the stage of insight or *vipassanā.* Whereas the five aggregates might be viewed as having a past, a future and the present, the latent tendencies (*anusaya*) pertaining to them however cannot be said to belong to any of those three time-concepts. The Path-knowledge destroys those tendencies. Take an example: someone cuts the roots of a young tree not yet bearing fruit. It is a fruit-bearing tree, of course. Now that its tap roots are gone, the fruits that would be born of the tree are precluded from coming into being. There is no occasion for the tree to bear any fruit. Likewise, the five aggregates that have the nature of coming into being are the necessary condition for the arising of defilements. Seeing, through insight, the evils of such arising (of the aggregates), the mind rushes forward to the haven of *nibbāna* that is devoid of arising, becoming , rebirth, and conditioned existence. The fact of the Path-Knowledge thus having taken refuge in *nibbāna* pre-empts any defilements that would have arisen in the five aggregates, more particularly the prime defilements of ignorance, craving, and wrong view that are going to set in motion (lit., *āyūhana*, 'to exert for') the process of rebirth. In this way the defilements have become sterile, rendered unfruitful. That is why it should be understood that Path-Knowledge has the fourfold function of: developing, realizing, abandonment or cessation (of defilements) and penetration or clear understanding."

Latent tendencies cannot be said to belong either to the past, the future or the present. When we say Path-Knowledge cuts off latent tendencies for defilements, in which time or time-factor does it do so? And how?

The answer to such a query is this: The Path-Knowledge indeed roots out latent tendencies. The latent tendencies of wrong view and doubt are liable to arise in a worldling. But they have no place in the *ariyā's*, or Noble One's consciousness. That is why the very change (in lineage) from a worldling into an *ariyā* precludes the arising of latent tendencies.

Just as, in our above example, the young tree's tap roots have been cut off even before the time for its fruit-bearing arrives, the turning into the Noble ariyahood through Path-knowledge renders the present aggregates incapable of bearing latent tendencies for defilements, now or in the future.

Path-consciousness Accomplishes A Fourfold Function; A Simile

A single thought or consciousness of Path-knowledge comprising three sub-moments of arising, developing and dissolution, accomplishes the fourfold function of Path-knowledge; (a) comprehending the truth of *dukkha*, (b) rejection or abandonment of craving, (c) realization of cessation of *dukkha*, (d) development of Path-knowledge. As the commentator puts it:-

Yathā padīpo apubbam acarimam ekakkhane cattāri kiccāni karoti vattim jhāpeti: andhakāram vidhamati ālokam parividamseti sineham pariyādiyati. Evam'eva maggañām apubbam acarimam ekakkhane cattāri saecāni abhisameti dukkham pariññabhi-samayena abhisameti samudayam pahanābhisamayena abhisameti maggam bhāvanābhisamayena abhisameti nirodham sacchikiriyābhisamayena abhisameti.

And the commentary illustrates the above fact in the following way:-

Yathā padīpo vattim jhāpeti evam maggañānam dukkham parijānāti Yathāñā padīpo andhakāram vidhamati evam maggañām samudayam pajahati. Yathāñā padīpo alokam parividamseti evam maggañānam sahajātādipaccayatāya sammāsankappādidhamma sankhātam maggam bhaveti. Yatha padīpo sineham pariyādiyati evam maggañānam kilesapariyādanam nirodham sacchikarotīti.

- *VisuddhiMagga*

The second passage renders the meaning of the first intelligible; it runs as follows:-

"In much the same way as the flame consumes the wick Path-consciousness or consciousness of Path-knowledge (that tends to *nibbāna*) fully perceives the true fact of *dukkha* that is inherent in all conditioned things. In much the same way as the light of the flame dispels the darkness, Path-consciousness dispels craving for existence that tends to rebirth. In much the same way as the light of the flame sheds light on all objects (in the previously dark room), Path-consciousness, by dint of conascent relationship and favourable conditions that have come to prevail, develops the eightfold Noble Path beginning with Right Thinking. In much the same way as the flame exhausts the fuel; Path-consciousness realizes the exhaustion of the defilements."

For memorizing: (a free rendering of the original Myanmar verse follows):-

To be consumed with Knowledge,

To dispel darkness,

To shed light,

To exhaust evil –

All those four functions fulfilled –

That's Path-consciousness.

Perceiving all conditioned things as awful,

Knowledge dawns.

Absorbed in cessation,

Craving vanishes.

Realizing the peace of cessation,

Nibbāna comes in sight

Musing with satisfaction on blissful cessation,

The Path is entered.

The point here is, even though you do not actually say you have no desire for any existence, if the consciousness of Path-knowledge is fixed on cessation, craving dies a natural death.

The Four Paths And the Defilements Or Fetters They Extirpate.

Defilements and fetters are purged from the mental system progressively at each Path as follows:-

Samyojanesu sakkāyaditthi vicikicchā sīlabbataparamāso ime dhammā pathamañānavajjha.

- Ibid.

"The three fetters of personality-belief or ego, (*sakkāyaditthi*), doubt (*vicikicchā*) and sole reliance on conduct and rituals (*sīlabbataparāmāso*) are destroyed by the First Path-knowledge."

Kāmarāgo patigho ime dhammā tatiyañāna vajjhā-Rūpa rāga arūparāga māna uddhacca avijjā ime dhammā catuttha ñānavajjhā.

"Sensuality, lust, or attachment, and hate, those two defilements are destroyed by the Third Path-knowledge. Attachment to the fine material sphere of existence and to the formless sphere of existence, conceit, distractedness, and ignorance - all these (finer) defilements are destroyed by the Fourth Path-Knowledge.

Of the fetters or the bonds that holds one to *samsāra*, the five of them - personality-belief, doubt, adherence to conduct and ritual, sensual lust and hate - are called the lower fetters (*orambhāgiyā samyojanas*). Attachment to the fine material sphere, attachment to formless sphere, conceit, distractedness and ignorance (five of them) are called the higher fetters (*uddhambhāgiya samyojanas*).

The lower fetters are destroyed at the three lower stages of enlightenment, the higher fetters by *arahattamagga*, the Fourth stage.

Kilesesu ditthi vicikicchā pathamañānavajjhā. Doso tatiyañānavajjho. Lobha moha māna thina uddhacca ahirika anottappāni catutthañāvajjhani.

- Ibid.

The above passage lists the defilements or *kilesa* that are exhausted at each Path-stage.

Micchāttesa micchāditthi musāvādo micchākammanto micchā ajivoti ime dhammā patthamañanvajjhā. Micchāsankappo pisunavācā pharusavācāto ime dhammā tatiya ñāna vajjhā.

The above passage refers to the wrongful ways that are abandoned when one attains to the First and the Third Path-knowledge respectively. Note that in regard to speech, (*vācā*), it is volition that counts and not mere utterance "*Cetanāyeva cettha vācāti veditabbā*." - Ibid.

Samphappalāpa micchāvāyāma micchāsati micchāsamadhi micchāvi muttiñānāni catutthañānavajjhāni.

This refers to the ultimate purity gained by abandoning all conceivable evil when arahatship is attained to.

Vipallāsesu anicce niccanti anattāni attati saññācitta ditthivipallāsā dukkhe sukham asubhe subbanti ditthivipallāso cāti ime pathamañāvajjhā. Asubhe subhanti saññācitta vipallāsā tatiyañañavajjhā. Dukkhe sukhanti saññācittavipallāsā catutthañānavajjha. - Ibid.

The above extract accounts for the twelve distorted or perverted views, *vipallasa*, that are straightened on attaining Path-Knowledge at the various stages. It will be found that these perversions arise as a matter of course in worldlings. They

are made up of three main classes - perception, *saññā*, consciousness, *citta*, and belief, *ditthi* - in four ways each - that conditioned things are permanent - *nicca*, pleasurable - *sukha*, agreeable or beautiful - *subha*, of one's own self - *atta*.

Āsavesu ditthāsavo pathamañānavajjho. Kāmāsavo tatityñānavajjho. Itare dve catutthañānavajjhā.

Of the four cankers, taints or outflows (*āsava*) the canker of wrong view is eliminated by the First Path. Lust is rooted out by the Third, the remaining two – attachment to existence and ignorance - are eradicated by the Fourth. The four *oghas* (whirlpools or floods) and the four *yogas* (yokes) are also counted in the same way.

Anusayesu ditthivicikicchanusaya pathamañanavajjhavā kāmarāga patighā nusaya tattiya ñānavajjha. Māna bhavarāga avijjānusaya catutthañānavajjha.

(Regarding bad volitional actions):

Akusalakammapathesu pānātipato adinnadānam micchācāro musāvādo michādithīti ime pañcadhammā patthamañānavajjhā, pisunavācā vyāpādo tatiyañānavajjho. Samphappalāpābhijjhā catutthañana vajjhā.

(Regarding hindrances to Knowledge):

Nivaraṇesu vicikicchā nīvaraṇam pathamañānavajjham kāmacchando vyāpādo kukkuccanti tini tatiyañānavajjhani. Thina middha uddhaccāni catu thañānavajjha.

(Regarding bad thoughts):

Akusalacittuppādesu cattāro ditthigatasampayuttā vicikicchāsampayutto cāti ime pañca cittā pathamañānavajjhā. Dve patighasampayuttā tatiyañānavajjhasesā catutthañānavajjha.

On the last subject of bad thoughts, arahatship destroys all the five remaining types of demeritorious consciousness, left over after the Third Path, viz: the four types of immoral consciousness dissociated with wrong view and distractedness.

The 'Eight Noble Ones' Explained

Winners of the four Path-Knowledge are called *magga puggala*; after winning the Knowledge, having established firmly as a result or fruition thereof, they are again

called *phala puggala*. Thus we have eight classes of *ariyās* or Noble Ones. As regards their moral attainments:-

Stream-entry Knowledge or *sotāpatti magga* and Fruition is attained to when one comprehends, without a shred of doubt, the Four Noble Truths.

The Once-returner's Knowledge or *sakadāgāmi magga* thins out lust and ill will.

The Non-returner's Knowledge or *anāgāmi magga* eradicates lust and ill will.

The *Arahat's* Knowledge or *Arahatta-magga* uproots the defilements: greed, delusion, conceit, sloth, distractedness, moral shamelessness and moral dread (i.e.,) horror at the consequences of evil).

Three Kinds of Rejection

Rejection of defilements is of three kinds or five kinds. Here the three kinds as shown in *VisuddhiMagga* will be described:-

Yam vikkhambhanappahānānañca pañcanīvaranānam pathāmajjhanam bhāvato tadangappahānanca ditthi gatānam nibbedikabhāgiyam Samādhi bhavato samucchedappahānanca lokuttaram khayagāmimaggam bhāvayatoti.

- *VisuddhiMagga*

On developing the First *Jhāna* (concentration) the five hindrances are held in abeyance. On developing the concentration that leads to insight-knowledge penetrating and breaking up the defilements, momentary rejection (abandonment) of defilements associated with wrong view is achieved. On developing Path-knowledge leading to cessation, which is of supramundane consciousness, total eradication of the defilements is achieved. Thus rejection or abandonment of defilements is reckoned in three stages or kinds.

The essence is: *Jhānic* concentration has the effect of just keeping the defilements at bay: it cannot blast them. Only development of insight or *vipassanā bhāvana* is capable of doing it, and even then, only temporarily. It is only when Path-consciousness is attained to, that the defilements are eradicated.

The Three Lower Path-knowledge Are Like Flashes Of Lighting;

Arahata-magga Is Like *Sakka's* Celestial Weapon That Destroys All Enemies.

The fleeting nature of the three lower Path-Knowledge is pointed out in *Dhammasangani* as follows:-

Vijjūpamā dhammā vajirūpamā dhammāti.

"The three lower Path-Knowledge are knowledge pertaining to conditioned phenomena or insight into phenomena (lit., *dhamma cakkhu*, 'eye piercing conditioned things'). They are fleeting like flashes of lightning. *Arahattamagga* (on the other hand) is like *Sakka's* celestial weapon *vajira* because it is 'the eye of wisdom' or ñā*na cakkhu*."

The reason for that statement follows:-

Puna anajjhottharanabhāvena kilesandhakāram viddhamsetum asamatthatāya vijjūpamā.

- *Atthasālinī* Commentary

"Those three lower Path-Knowledges, being incapable of total extinction of the defilements, leaving them room for recurrence, are likened to flashes of lightning that cannot dispel darkness for long."

The Path-Knowledges at the three lower stages extinguish certain defilements while expelling the rest momentarily only. It is only at the final stage of arahatship that every defilement is totally extinguished like *Sakka's* celestial weapon that lays waste all it strikes.

Dukkha Is Contemptible, Empty

Referring to *VisuddhiMagga* again, we have:-

Idañca pathamasaccam kucchitam kasmā aneka upaddavadhitthānato tuccham bālajānaparikappitadhuva subha sukha tattabhāva rahitatthā tasmā kucchitattā tucchattā ca dukkhanti vuccati.

“This First Truth (Suffering) is contemptible because it is the very basis or foundation of innumerable woes and ills. (For it is the ground for the happening of eight kinds of misfortunes; viz: rebirth, ageing, disease, death, liability to fall into the four miserable states, the source of all past ill, the source of all future ill, and the struggling for survival at the present). It is empty and vain because it lacks any permanence, agreeableness, happiness or self as fools think. Since it is contemptible and vain it is called *dukkha*.”

Craving, the Cause of *Dukkha*, Needs Allied *Dhammas* For Effectiveness.

The commentary points out:-

Idancā pi dutiyasaccam avasesapaccayasamāyoge sati dukkhass uppattikāranam hoti iti dukkhassa samyoge uppattikaranatthā dukkha samudayanti vuccati. - Ibid.

“As for the Second Truth, the origin of *dukkha*, i.e., craving, it causes *dukkha* if it is allied with such other *dhammas* as ignorance, clinging and *kamma*. Since it is instrumental in causing *dukkha* it is called the cause or origin of *dukkha* in the ultimate sense.

The Buddha specifically calls craving (‘craving for sensuality, craving for existence and craving for non-existence’) the cause of *dukkha*. This is because Craving is the determining factor for rebirth. The Sub-commentary puts it thus:-

Aññesu dukkhahetusu santesupi taṇhāyeva samudayasaccāti. Kasmā taṇhā padhāna karanatthāti.

“Even though there are also other causal factors (for *dukkha*) (such as ignorance, clinging and *kamma*), Craving alone is called the cause of *dukkha* in truth. Why? Because it is the determining factor. (For it is craving that gives rise to satisfaction with fresh existence.* This sense of satisfaction called death-proximate consciousness, appears at the moment of death, and makes itself manifest in either of the three death-proximate signs, *kamma*,or kammic action recalled, or destination (*gati*). This holds true for everyone except *arahats*).

Cessation means the entire stoppage of all

the five kinds of destinations (*gati*).

The commentary continues:-

Tatiyasaccam pana yasmā nisaddo abhāvam rodha saddo ca cārakam dīpeti. Tasmā abhāvo ettha samsāracārakasankhātassa dukkharodhassa sabba gatisuññattā. Samadhigate vā tasmim samsāracāraka sankhātassa dukkha rodhassa abhāvo hoti. (Kasmā) tappatipakkhattāti pi dukkhanirodhanti vuccati. Dukkhassa vā anuppādanirodhapaccayattā dukkhanirodhanti (vuccati). - Ibid.

"Now, about the Third Truth. The word *ni* carries a negative meaning whereas *rodha* means *carakam*, a cage or prison, i.e., where one is confined. Hence in cessation or *nibbāna*, there is an absence of any confinement through the non-existence of *dukkha*. How? (Why?) Because there is no going (*gati*) from one form of existence to another; all the five categories of destination are stopped. In other words, one who has duly attained to Path-Knowledge, is totally absolved from being confined to *samsāra* through rebirth, the starting point of *dukkha*. How? (Why?) Because the antithesis of becoming has been achieved. Put in another way, since it (*nibbāna*) is the condition whereby non-recurrence of *dukkha* is affected, it is called the cessation of *dukkha*."

Further, the Buddha describes cessation of *dukkha* in terms of cessation of craving. For craving must cease if *dukkha* is to cease.

On this point *VisuddhiMagga* states:-

Samudayanirodhena dukkhanirodho. -Samudayanirodhena hi dukkham nirujjahati. Na aññathā. Tenāha:

Yathāpi mūle anuppaddavedaḷhe

Chinno pi rukkho punadeva rūhati.

Evampi taṇhānusaye anūhate

Nibbattati dukkhamidam punappunanti.

- *VisuddhiMagga* quoting *Dhammapada* v. 338

'Through cessation of (its) cause (craving) *dukkha's* cessation takes place. That is indeed so. Only when the cause ceases, the result (*dukkha*) is halted. There is no other means for annihilating *dukkha*. Thus the Buddha said:

* ‘Satisfaction with fresh existence’: *Bhavanikanti taṇhā*: it is this strong force of craving that makes even fresh becoming in the miserable states readily acceptable to one who falls into them, not to speak of those destined for the fortune existences.

‘Just as a tree,

Even though cut down,

Grows again if the tap-root is left intact,

Even so, unless the latent craving is rooted out,

The painful round of existences

Will occur again and again.’”

The Commentator is quoting the Buddha’s remarks in the case of a female pig who in a previous birth before the last had been a resplendent *Brahmā*. Because the *Brāhma* died a worldling, without having been purified of latent craving, she now had to fare in *samsāra’s* tedious journey.

Anupādisesa Nibbāna **As Described In** ***Patisambhidā-magga***.

As for the Fourth Truth (the Path, *magga saccā*), it has been already explained at p. 174 *ante*. With the cessation (abandonment) of craving, *nibbāna* is realized here and now, with this mortal frame still in existence. This is called *sa upādisesa nibbāna*. When an *arahat* breathes his last (*cuti*) he is said to enter *parinibbana* or that he has realized *anupādisesa nibbāna*, ‘*nibbāna* without any remnants of existence’.

PatisambhidaMagga gives a description of this as follows:-

Idañceva cakkhu pavattam pariyādiyati aññañca cakkhu pavattam na uppajjati. Idañceva sotam pavattam pariyādiyati. Aññañca sotam pavattam na uppajjati. Idañceva ghānam pavattam pariyādiyati aññañca ghānam pavattam na upajjati. Idañca jīvham pavattam pariyādiyati aññam ca jivham pavattam na uppajjati. Idañceva kāyam pavattam pariyādiyati aññanca kāyam pavattam na

uppajjati. Idañceva manam pavattam pariyadiyati aññañca manam pavattam na uppajjati.

"Herein, in this visual sentience, i.e., the visually sensitive organ of eye, the process of becoming is brought to an end (after *cuti*): after the present eye is used up (by the process of ageing and death), no fresh eye arises after *cuti* or death."

The meaning is, the *kamma*-produced material and mental aggregates, on dissolution, will cease to come up again. This cessation of the process of fresh arising is called *anupāddisesa nibbāna* or, 'Final Peace without a trace of existence remaining'. (Read in the meaning for ear, nose, tongue, body and mind similarly as *cakkhu*, eye).

Nibbāna here and now, with the aggregates still in existence (sa *upādisesa nibbāna*), is (also) called *nibbāna* because it is the necessary condition, already arrived at, for the cessation of ignorance, clinging and *kamma* that cause rebirth, and thereby winds up the semsāric journey. By the term *sa upadisesa nibbāna* we refer to all the stages of Path Knowledge beginning from Stream-entry to arahatship. On the dissolution (*bhañga*) of the aggregates as an arahat, i.e., at *parinibbāna*, *anupādisesa nibbāna* is realized.

The Sixteen Points of Significance in the Four Noble Truths

With a view to clearing up any misconception regarding the nine supramundane *dhammas*, the Four Noble Truths should be understood in their sixteen points of significance as follows:-

> *Dukkhassa pīlanattho sankhatato santapattho viparinā matthoti. - VisuddhiMagga,*
>
> quoting *PatismbhidaMagga*

"*Dukkha* should be understood in its four realities, namely: recurrent oppression through birth, ageing, disease, death, grief, etc; conditionality, i.e., the necessity to be dragging along aimlessly from moment to moment, from day to day, from existence to existence, not unlike the wage-earner living from hand to mouth, under the vagaries of *kamma*, mind, temperature and nutrition; recurrent torment or burning passion; changeableness or corruptibility of the five aggregates evidenced in ageing and death."

Samudayassa āyuhanattho nidānattho samyogattho palibodhatthoti.

- Ibid.

"Craving, the cause of *dukkha*, should be understood in its four realities: namely, it is in the nature of hoarding every possible element of woe or trouble; it serves as the unfailing source of woes and troubles; it binds the mind to troublesome things just as the oxen are tethered; it acts as obstacle (through the five aggregates that are clung to, and through the extended ego such as wife and children, etc.) to freedom from samsāric round of existences."

Nirodhassa nissarenattho vivekattho asankhattho amatatthoti. - Ibid.

"Cessation should be understood in its four realities, namely: as release from rebirth and consequences; as seclusion from round of defilements, kammic action and kammic resultants; as being unconditioned; as being deathless by virtue of its birthlessness."

Maggassa niyyānattho hetvattho dassanattho adhipateyyatthoti.

"*Magga*, the Path, should be understood in its four realities, namely: as a means (conveyance) of getting out of the round of rebirths, etc.; as the destroyer of the cause of *dukkha*; as the shedder of light (illumination) of peace, *nibbāna*, consequent to quelling of passion; as the paramount *dhamma* that excels every *dhamma* including mundane merits where craving holds sway."

Contemplating On the Four Noble Truths: Simile of the Burden

The commentary gives the following simile to explain the Four Noble Truths:-

Bhāroviya dukkhasaccam datthabbam bhārādānamviya samudayasaccam datthabbam bhāranikkhepanam viya nirodhasaccam datthabbam bhāraanik khepanupāyo viya maggasaccam datthabbam. - VisuddhiMagga

"The aggregates of mind-and-matter, nothing but *dukkha* in truth, should be considered as a burden. Craving, the cause of *dukkha*, should be considered as the imposer of the burden. The Truth of cessation should be considered as the throwing

away of the burden. The Path should be considered as the attempts at such throwing away."

Contemplating On the Four Noble Truths: Another Simile

Rogoviya dukkhasaccam datthabbam roganidanamiva samudayasaccam datthabbam rogavūpasasmo viya nirodhasaccam datthabbam bhesajjam'iva maggasaccam datthabbam. - Ibid.

"The aggregates of existence, *dukkha* in truth, should be viewed as a disease. Craving, the cause, should be viewed as the contributing factor to the disease. Cessation should be viewed as successful cure. The Path should be viewed as the medicine."

Why the Buddha Expounded the Four Truths In the

Order of *Dukkha*, the Cause, Cessation and the Way to Cessation.

The reason behind the Buddha's method of exposition of the Four Noble Truths in the order of *dukkha*, the cause thereof, cessation, and the way therefore, has been stated in *VisuddhiMagga* thus:-

Ettha ca olārikattā sabbasattasādhāranattā ca suviññeyyanti dukkha saccam pathamamvuttam. Tato tāssa hetūdassanattham tadanantaram samudaya saccam vuttam. Hetu nirodhā phalanirodhoti ñāpanattham tato param nirodhassaccam. Tadādhigamupāyada-ssanattham nate maggasaccam vuttam.

"Herein, the Buddha stated *dukkha* as the First Truth because *dukkha* is of concrete or obvious nature (lit., *olarika*, 'gross') and is of universal applicability (i.e., relevant to every one of us), so that it is readily understandable. After that, to show the root-cause of *dukkha* the Buddha explained craving as the cause. Next, to enlighten the hearer that if cause is broken result must cease. The Buddha dwelt on cessation as the necessary goal of ending *dukkha*. And lastly, as the (only) way to bring the cause (craving) to a stop, the (eightfold) Path is declared."

There Are Only Four Ultimate Truths - No More, No Less.

1. *Pavatti pavattaka nivatti nivattakavasena catubbidham hoti.*
2. *Sankhata taṇha asankhata dassanañānam vasena catubbidham hoti.*
3. *Tathā pariññeyya pahātabba sacchikātabba bhāvetabbanam kiccavasena catubbidham hoti.*
4. *Taṇhāvatthu taṇhā taṇhānirodha taṇhānirodhupāyavasena catubbidham hoti.*
5. *Alaya ālayārāmatā ālayasamugghāta upayānāñca vasena cattāreva vuttānīti.* - Ibid.

1. The occurrence of *dukkha*, the causation of rebirth and consequent *dukkha*, the cessation of the mind-matter complex of existence, and the means to attain to such cessation -- thus in these four ways the truth is defined.
2. The conditioned character of the aggregates that is *dukkha*; the character of craving that is the cause; the character of cessation which is the unconditioned; the character of enlightenment that is the Path-Knowledge - in these four ways in terms of characteristics.
3. Also, there are: what needs to be perceived, i.e., *dukkha* as the First Truth; the rejection or forsaking of craving, the cause; the cessation that needs to be experienced or realized; the development to attain to cessation - four ways in terms of function.
4. The basis of craving, i.e., the five aggregates, the craving for the aggregates, the cessation of craving and the practice leading to cessation - in these four ways is the Path-practice defined.
5. Desire, satisfaction with (one's own) desire, removal of desire, and means of removal of desire - in these four ways is Truth set forth.

There Is No Doer or No Sufferer Apart From the Four Truths

Dukkham'eva hi na koci dukkhito

Na kārako na kiriyāva vijjati

Atthi nibbuti na nibbuto pumā

Maggamatti gamako na vijjatīti.

"Indeed (it is worth remembering that) there exists only *dukkha* as expressed in aggregates of mind-and-matter and no man who 'suffers' *dukkha* exists. There is the process or (kammic) action, but no 'doer' exists. There is peace (or cessation) but no

man who ever enjoys the peace. There is the Path leading to *nibbāna*, but no man ever goes to *nibbāna*."

The Sixteen Functions Required of the Path

The sixteen functions are as follows:-

For the First Path-knowledge the bhikkhu has -

1. to comprehend *dukkha* penetratingly;
2. to abandon craving, the cause of *dukkha*;
3. to realize cessation or *nibbāna*;
4. to develop insight to realize *nibbāna*.

Having realized *nibbāna* to a certain extent (in proportion to what defilements one has discarded), the *bhikkhu* (naturally) strives for higher attainments in the Path-practice and in respect of the three higher stages - *sakadāgāmi magga, anāgāmi magga and arahatta magga* he fulfils the self-same four functions as in the First-stage. Hence four fours make sixteen.

Twelve Kinds of Path-Knowledge Reckoned In

Three Ways Regarding the Four Truths

For each of the Four Noble Truths three aspects of the Path-Knowledge are involved: comprehending the significance of the Truth, *sacca ñāna*; knowing the requisite function involved, *kicca ñāna*; ascertaining oneself that those functions have been accomplished, *kata ñāna*.

Regarding *dukkha*, one comprehends that the five aggregates of existence are only *dukkha* in truth and reality: this is *sacca ñāna*. One also knows that this comprehension is the necessary function: *kicca ñāna*. One then ascertains oneself that this truth of *dukkha* has been comprehended: this is *kata ñāna*.

Regarding *samudaya*, one comprehends that craving is the source or cause of *dukkha*; one knows that craving must be abandoned; and one ascertains oneself that such abandonment has been achieved - thus there are three successive knowledge here too.

Regarding *nirodha*, one comprehends that cessation is the truth of ending *dukkha*; one knows that cessation must be realized by direct knowledge (through insight); one then ascertains oneself that cessation has been duly realized - thus the three successive knowledge again.

Regarding *magga*, one comprehends that this in truth is the way for cessation of *dukkha*; one knows that the eight-fold Noble Path must be diligently practised for development of insight; and one ascertains that one has developed sufficiently to that end - thus the three successive knowledge here again.

In brief, the knowledge about the Truth, the knowledge about what needs to be done about the Truth, and the ascertainment that one has actually done that - these three aspects for each of the four Noble Truths make up the twelve kinds of Path-Knowledge.

(It will be seen that the twelve kinds of knowledge belong to the field of practice (*patipatti*) of the Buddha's *sāsana* or Teaching.)

The ascertaining knowledge or *katañāna* is a thorough analytical knowledge that the eighty-one mundane types of consciousness, the fifty-one mental concomitants dissociated with greed, and the twenty-eight kinds of materiality are all *dukkha* only. This needs to be comprehended first, and that sort of comprehension is called *kicca ñāna*. Craving which is (analytically speaking), the mental concomitant of Greed, belonging to the eight types of consciousness associated with greed, needs to be discarded: this is the knowledge of the function about *samudaya saccā*. And craving has been duly discarded. Cessation needs to be realized, and that realization has come through, i.e., cessation has been made the object of one's consciousness (which is Path-consciousness or *magga citta*). And the development of Path-knowledge has been duly fulfilled in the sense that the eight constituents of the Path have been in the consciousness at certain thought-moments in the course of meditation. Reviewing oneself, one ascertains that this function has been performed. That is *kata ñāna*.

Realizing *Nibbāna*: the Significance Of the Phrase.

To realize *nibbāna* means to be conscious of cessation of *dukkha* or, in Pali terms, 'to be face to face' with cessation.

For instance, on Stream-entry, when wrong view and doubt are abandoned, all misfortunes (*dukkha*) arising out of the two defilements cease altogether. Cessation of *dukkha* means the *bhikkhu* is precluded (by own merit) from falling into the four miserable states. All past evil *kamma* lose their potential, i.e., one has not to suffer their consequences.* No fresh evil is possible now. Rebirth is restricted to seven further becoming at the most. The Path-consciousness is so well established that in

those maximum of seven existences (in the fortunate sphere) one is guided by self-enlightenment, without need for a teacher, to work for advancement into higher Path-Knowledge. Until one attains to Stream-entry all those *dukkha* would have to be borne.

As one gets progressively purified with higher enlightenments, the mass of ill is proportionately reduced.

Up to the moment of final dissolution as an *arahat*, the *nibbāna* thus experienced is termed *sa upādisesa nibbāna*. It is *nibbāna* with the burden of the existing aggregates being borne still. At the *cuti* moment of the *arahat*, when the last set of the five aggregates is dissolved, this burden also falls off and what is called *parinibbāna* - a total or complete peace - is realized.

* By. evil 'consequences': i.e., with the exception of grave evil or *garu kamma* (Translator's note)

Criteria For Judging Whether One Has

Attained the Path And Its Fruition or Not.

Self-appraisal can be made of oneself whether the Path-knowledge and its Fruition has been attained to or not, vide the Mirror Discourse in *Mahā Vagga*, *Dhīgha Nikāya*.

The text is somewhat elaborate on this, so only a gist will be given here in verse - (a free translation follows:)

"One has unreserved confidence in the

Buddha, the *Dhamma* and the *Sanghā*;

One is steadfast in morality worthy of

acclaim by the Noble Ones;

One is free from a deluded 'self'"

When one meets the above criteria one can safely say to oneself, "I have entered the Stream".

Unreserved confidence in the Three Gems is the opposite of blind faith. It is an intelligent faith (*avecca pasāda*) that comes of a firm conviction that the Three Gems constitute one's real refuge (*saranam*). The conviction is so firm that a Noble One would even risk his life in the act of taking the Three Gems as refuge. It is for this reason that he would rather starve to death than steal for a bite of food. In short, it is this unwavering faith in the law of *kamma* (the preliminary Right-Understanding for a Buddhist) that keeps the Stream-entrant from breaking, in ever so small a way, the three kinds of bodily evil and the four kinds of verbal evil. Right Livelihood is accordingly adhered to under all circumstances.

To a Noble One the Four Noble Truths have become a hard fact realized by direct knowledge so that there is not the slightest uncertainty about them.

As a consequence, the belief in ego or self is abandoned. Craving for any form of existence is cut off.

Regarding morality, observance of the five precepts by lay disciples is sufficient to be called 'worthy of acclaim by the Noble Ones'.

Why *Nibbāna* Is Called Peace.

The peace of *nibbāna* is founded on total absence of *dukkha*. It is free from *dukkha* because there is no arising (that necessarily implies decay and dissolution). There is a complete cessation of activity in *nibbāna*, hence it is blissful.

As *PatisambhiddhāMagga* puts it:

Anuppādo sukkham ajāti sukham.

"Non-arising is blissful (since there is no necessity for decay and death). Birthlessness is blissful (or the non-becoming of the five aggregates is blissful) because no ageing and death need occur."

Again: *Dukkhā sankhārā sukho* nirodho.

"Conditioned things such as the aggregates of materiality-and-mentality are *dukkha* since they are liable to arising and dissolution. Cessation or non-arising of conditioned things is blissful because no dissolution is necessary."

The essence is: all forms of arising or becoming are bound to decay and die away, hence it is *dukkha*. Cessation of conditioned phenomena such as mind-and-matter that constitute the five aggregates is therefore freedom from *dukkha*. *Nibbāna* is therefore the antithesis of the *dukkha* that conditionality implies. Hence it is blissful or called the ultimate happiness.

Three Kinds of Happiness: *Santi-sukkha, phala-sukka and Vedayita-sukha* Distinguished.

It was the Venerable *Sāriputta's* custom to utter the joyous expression, "Blissful, revered ones, is this *nibbāna*", at the congregation of *bhikkhus*.

On one occasion a certain *bhikkhu* rejoined: "Venerable Sir, since *nibbāna* is not felt by any sense-faculty how could it be called blissful?"

To this the Venerable *Sāriputta* replied; "It is precisely because *nibbāna* cannot be felt by any sense-faculty that it is so blissful. Anything that you can feel is subject to certain conditions only: it does not last. No conditioned phenomena is made to last. All is bound to change and vanish. That is why all is *dukkha* only. *Nibbāna* does not arise from cause, so it does not change and vanish. It is stable, permanent, and tranquil. It is peace, the ultimate happiness, *santi-sukha*.

"There is an expression "*nibbuti bhuñjāmānā*" which describes the enjoyment of cessation by the Noble Ones whose mind, while dwelling on the peace of non-arising, enjoys the Fruition of the Path-Knowledge. This is the Noble type of enjoyment because the object of enjoyment is nibbanic peace. It is enjoyment of the utmost purity that is quite permissible (*sevitabba*).

Enjoyment of worldly pleasures however is not pure since it is always tinged with, if not steeped in, lust, hate and delusion.

Therefore discrimination should be made between: (1) the eternal bliss of *nibbāna* (*santisukha*); (2) the momentary bliss while the mind, by virtue of supramundane consciousness of the Noble Ones, dwells on *nibbāna* (*phala sampātti sukha*); (3) worldly enjoyments.

Why *Nibbāna* Is Worthy Of Delighting In (*Tatrābhiratimiccheyya*):

"Desirable it is for one to be absorbed in the joy of *nibbāna*, *Tatrābhirati miccheyya*" said the Buddha.

Why did the Buddha say so? The Commentator provides the answer:

Kasmā yantam santa panīta amata khema sukha sīvaguna sampannattā.

"Because it (*nibbāna*) is replete with such attributes as tranquility, transcendence, deathlessness, happiness, and coolness."

In another context (ref: *MahāVagga*) the Buddha referred to *nibbāna* as "the resort of the Noble disciple who has exhausted craving":

(*Taṇhakkhayarato hoti sammāsambuddhasāvako*)

Nibbāna Is the *Dhamma* Worth Bearing In Mind Perpetually By the Wise.

Opāneyyiko is one of the six attributes of the *Dhamma*. Its meaning is explained in the Commentary thus: - *Asankhate pana attanocittena upanayanam arahatīti opāneyyiko.* (Vis. I.)

As for the unconditioned *dhamma* or *nibbāna* it is worth to be borne in mind perpetually by the wise (i.e., the *dhamma* worth dwelling in for all times)." *Nibbāna* is therefore called 'the enjoyment or possession of the illustrious', *anomasatta paribhoga*.

Why *Nibbāna* Is Free From Ageing, Disease And Death,

How It Is 'the Glorious City'.

The sub-commentary explains *nibbāna* in the following terms:-

Amatam vuccati nibbānam yañyhi na jiyati na mīyati na cavati kasmā ajātattā. - Sāratthadīpani Tikā (I)

"*Nibbāna* is deathless since it has no ageing, no disease, and no repeated dissolutions. Why? (How) Because there is no birth."

The essence is, *nibbāna* is free from death not because it is something immortal but because it is free from birth or fresh arising.

Nibbānapura is another term for *nibbāna*. It is called 'the City of *nibbāna'* not in the literal sense of the term '*pura'*: obviously, there is no material phenomenon in *nibbāna*. The City is an epithet that metaphorically signifies safety. As the royal city is well-fortified so is *nibbāna* well-fortified with birthlessness. So it is the *dhamma* that the Noble Ones find worthwhile to dwell in. For enjoyment of *nibbānic* bliss is enjoyment of the sublime types due to its being free from worldly taints (*nirāmisa*). Its joy is simply transcendental.

Looked at another way, *nibbāna* belongs to the supramundane level or *Lokuttara bhūmi* in contradistinction to the three mundane levels or *lokiya bhūmi* of the Sensual Sphere (*kāma bhūmi*) the Fine Material Sphere (*rūpa bhūmi*) and the Formless Sphere (*arūpa bhūmi*). It is the domain of the Noble Ones, *avattā bhūmi*, i.e., where the *ariyas* abide mentally, enjoying the *nibbānic* bliss.

Proper Wishing In Dedicating a Meritorious Deed.

In dedicating a deed of merit, if one wishes (as the result of the merit) for the Path-knowledge with its Fruition, just as the Knowledge won by *arahats*, ranging from the All- knowledge Buddha to the *paccekabuddha*, the Chief Disciples, the great disciples and the ordinary disciples, it is commendable because such wishing is not tainted by greed and delusion. Where *nibbana* is wished for, however, there is the danger of falling into greed and delusion unless one understands the significance of *nibbāna*.

Therefore a wishing-form that is free from greed and deludion is suggested below:-

"May the meritorious deed bring cessation of rebirth through insight", (i.e., to come face to face with *nibbāna'*). This form of wishing amounts to non-greed because wishing for non-becoming (in any form of existence) is free from greed and delusion. And cessation of rebirth is virtually *nibbāna* without the remnant (or sustaining force) of existence. Wishing for birthless is the same as wishing for *nibbāna*, only more vivid and taint-free, (i.e., for those not having a fair idea of *nibbāna*).

Here are some forms of prayer:-

Idam me puññam dukkhanirodham sacchikaromi: "May this good deed of mine lead me towards the realization of *dukkha's* end, *nibbāna*."

Idam me puññam sabbadukkhā parimuccissāmi: "May this good deed of mine release me from all forms of *dukkha*, (i.e., rebirth and its consequences)."

The second wishing, it will be seen, means wishing for *nibbāna*, for it is only in *nibbāna* that all forms of *dukkha* inherent in conditioned existence - birth, ageing, death - are totally absent.

Note that the above wishing does not include wishes for fortunate or glorious existences such as ruler of men or *devas* or *Brahmās*. Yet it is in the very nature of merit to bring these glorious fruits as a matter of course. So there is actually no need to include such mundane wishes in one's dedication. If one were to do so, it amounts to a taint of delusion. The usual wishes that one "be free from the four miserable states of *apāya*,* the three scourges,** the eight handicaps,*** the five enemies,# the four calamities,## the five misfortunes or losses,### - also are not included in the above wishing-forms. Still, these misfortunes too are automatically precluded by virtue of one's merit properly earned (i.e., willed).

* '*Apāya*': Please see foot note at p. ante.

** 'The three scourges', *kappa*: universal destruction (holocaust) through war or strife, pestilence or famine, brought about by the overwhelming forces of evil among mankind.

*** The Eight Handicaps:- The Eight Circumstances that disable one from gaining Path-Knowledge, viz:-

9. Birth in the tortuous realms or *niraya*,

   (ii) Animals, (iii) Hungry beings (*Peta*), (iv) Brahmās in Non-perception (*asaññasatta*) realm and in Formless (*arupa*) spheres, (v) Congenitally disabled person, (vi) Those holding gross wrong views i.e., believers in "No causality" (*ahetuka ditthi*), "no consequence" (*akiriya ditthi*), "no resultant" (*natthika ditthi*), (vii) Those living in places where the Buddha's teaching is never heard, (viii) Beings born in Void Aeons (*suñña kappa*) when no Buddha arises.

The Five Enemies:

9. Water (ii) fire (iii) rulers (iv) robbers or thieves (v) Beings who hold a grudge against one.

The Four Calamities (*Vipattis*)

9. Birth in the four miserable states

(ii) Physical disability

(iii) having fallen under bad times, primarily under unjust or unscrupulous rulers,

(iv) having adopted a bad or unmeritorious livelihood.

The Five Misfortunes or Losses (*Vyasanam*)

i. Loss of relatives
ii. Loss of property
iii. Loss of health or being diseased
iv. Loss of morality
v. Loss of right view (i.e., espousing a wrong view)

Chapter Six

Miscellaneous

"Better to live a day knowing the Truth than

living a hundred years in ignorance"

The Buddha on a certain occasion said:-

"Yo ca vassasatam jīve apassam dhammamuttamam

Ekāham jīvitam seyyo passato dhammamuttamam":

- *Dhammapada*, v. 115.

"Though one should live a hundred years

Not seeing the sublime *Dhamma*,

Yet better indeed is the single day

Lived by one who sees the sublime *Dhamma*."

Herein, 'sublime *Dhamma'*, *dhammamuttamam*, of course refers to the Four Noble Truths. 'Seeing' means perceiving through insight.

"**Better to live a day comprehending the rise and**

fall of conditioned things …"

Further discourses in similar strain are quoted below from *Dhammapada*:

Yo ca vassasatam jīve apassam udayabbayam

Ekāham jīvitam seyyo passato udayabbayam.

- Ibid, v. 113

"Though one should live a hundred years

Not comprehending the rise and fall of conditioned things, the five aggregates;

Yet better indeed is the single day

Live by one who comprehends the rise and fall of the aggregates."

"**Better to live a day making steadfast efforts …"**

Yo ca vassasatam jīve kusito hinaviriyo

Ekāham jīvitam seyyo viriyarambhato daḷham.

"Though one should live a hundred years,

Idling and sluggish.

Yet better indeed is the single day

Lived by one who is steadfast in his efforts (in the practice of the *Dhamma*). - Ibid, v. 112

"Better than sole lordship over earth, etc., is the

Fruition of Stream-entry."

Pathavyā ekarajjena saggassa gamanena vā

Sabbalokādhipaccena sotāpatti phalamvaram.

- Ibid, v. 178

"Better than sole lordship over the earth,

Better than going to the *deva*-world,

Better than universal sovereignty,

Is the Fruition of Stream-entry."

'Going to the *deva*-world' means being born a *deva*. Stream-entry is superior to the most exalted worldly existences because as a worldling none can escape from the danger of falling into the miserable states whereas once Stream-entry is attained to, he or she is free from such unfortunate destinations.

Delight in the *Dhamma* excels all delights

Sabba dānam dhammadānam jināti.

Sabba rasam dhammaraso jināti.

Sabba ratim dhammarati jināti.

Tanhakkhayo sabbadukkham jināti.

-Dhamapada, v. 354

"The gift of the *Dhamma* excels all gifts.

The sweetness of the *Dhamma* excels all sweetness.

The delight in the *Dhamma* excels all delights.

The extinction of craving overcomes all suffering (*dukkha*).”

The extinction of craving means *nibbāna*.

The Gift of the *Dhamma* dealing with the Noble Truths is supreme even among Gifts of the *Dhamma*.

Ime dhammā abhiññeyyā ime dhammā parinneyyā ime dhammā pahātabbā ime dhammā sacchikātabā ime dhammā bhāvetabbāti saccāni bhāvento amatādhigamam dhammam kathetvā deti. Idam sikhāpatta dhammadā nam nāma.

“The Four Noble Truths should be comprehended with discrimination (as ‘this is *Dukkha’*; ‘this is its cause’; ‘this is its cessation’; ‘this is the way to cessation’; more particularly: that *Dukkha* should be known penetratingly in the sense that these conditioned phenomena that rise and fall in the three spheres of existence are in truth painful, unsatisfactory, ill; that craving of all forms being the cause of *dukkha* should be abandoned; that cessation is the true peace, *nibbāna*, and this needs to be realized; that the eightfold Noble Path beginning with Right Understanding, being the true Path to release from *dukkha*, needs to be developed. If one develops these four Truths and propagates by word of mouth the sublime *Dhamma* that assures one against death, (that leads to *nibbāna*), it amounts to the noblest gift of all gifts of *Dhamma*.”

The above passage underlines the excellence of the Four Truths even among all *Dhammas*.

Greed, hate and delusion destroy one who harbors them.

Lobhodoso ca moho ca purisam pāpacetasam

Him santi attasambhūta tacasāramva samphlam - Itivuttaka

“Just as the bamboo or the palm-tree or the reed is brought to ruin by its own fruit, so also under this Teaching (*Sāsasnā*) the wicked man is brought to ruin by greed,

hate and delusion that have been born within him since existences beyond reckoning.”

This passage reminds one that evil that lurks within is far more dangerous than external evil.

“**There is no fire like the fire of passion”**

Natthi rāgasamo aggi

natthi dosasamo kali,

Natthi khandhasamā dukkhā.

Natthi santisamam sukkam. - Dhammapada, v. 202

“There is no fire like passion (*rāga*).

There is no depravity like hatred.

There is no ill like (the necessity of) the five aggregates.

There is no bliss like the Eternal peace of *nibbāna*.”

The self- perpetuating five aggregates are the greatest of ills on account of repeated births and deaths. In *nibbāna* this vicious process is stopped, hence eternal peace.

“**Terrible is the fire of passion; Heavy like**

Mount *Meru* is the burden of existence”

The Venerable *Sāriputta* once uttered these joyous words before a congregation of *bhikkhus*:- *Bhave sātām na vindāmi*

Dayhanto tīhi aggihi,

Bharito bhavabharena

Nerum uddharito yathā. - *Apādāna*

"(Revered Ones), with the three evils (fires) of passion, hate and delusion (incessantly) burning within me, I found no relief in all the three spheres of existence over timeless periods. Heavy had been the burden of existence that may be likened to Mount *Meru* thrust upon one's shoulders."

On Setting Up An Island Of Refuge That Can Withstand the Floods of Defilements

Arahatship has been compared by the Buddha to an island refuge. vide *Dhammapada*: *Utthānenappamādena samyamena damena ca Dipam karotha medhāvi yam ogho nābhikīrati*.(v. 25)

"By sustained effort, earnestness, restraint (of one's senses or faculties), and self-control (in deed, word and thought), the wise man may build up for his refuge an island (the Fruition of *arahatship*) where no floods (of defilements) can overwhelm."

How the Defilements are purged

The simile of the goldsmith:-

Anupubbena medhavi thokam thokam khane khane,

Kammāro rajatasseva niddhame malamattano. - Dhammapada, v. 239

"Gradually does the wise man remove his own impurities, little by little, from time to time, as a goldsmith removes the impurities from gold or silver."

The Buddha's exhortation to the *bhikkhus* in *Pātimokkha*

Sabbapāpassa akāranam kusalassupasampadā Sacittapariyodāpanam etam buddhāna sāsanam, - Dhammmapada, v. 483.

Not to do any evil, to cultivate good, to keep the mind absolutely pure: this is the teaching of the *Buddhas*."

Khantī paramam tapo titikkhā

Nibbānam paramam vadanti buddhā.

Na hi pabbajjito parūpāghātī.

Na samano hoti param vihetthayanto. - Ibid., v. 184

Anupavādo anupaghāto

Patimokkhe ca samvaro

Mattaññutā ca bhattasmim

Pantānca sayānāsanam

Adhicitte ca āyogo

Etam buddhāna sāsanam. - Ibid., v. 185

"Enduring patience is the highest moral training; *Nibbāna*, the unconditioned. The extinction of becoming is supreme - say the *Buddhas*. He is not a recluse (*pabbajjito*) who harms others; nor is he an ascetic (*samano*) who hurts or harasses others."

Not blaming, not injuring, restraint according to the *bhikkhu* precepts (*patimokkha*), moderation in food, resorting to seclusion, being intent on gaining concentration (i.e., mastery of mind): this is the teaching of the *Buddhas*."

The Four Kinds of Knowledge And the Five Kinds of Right Understanding.

The *Atthasālinī* Commentary gives the following four kinds or types of knowledge:

1. *Kāmāvacarā paññā*: knowledge that discerns the suffering that prevails in the four miserable states of *apāya* and leads to efforts aimed at escaping those states and faring through the (seven) fortunate states.
2. *Rūpāvacarā paññā*: knowledge that discerns the unsatisfactoriness or hazards of the sensual sphere and aspires to the *jhanic* ecstasy of the fine material sphere of the *Brahmās*.

3. *Arūpāvacarā paññā*: knowledge that discerns the unsatisfactoriness or hazards of the fine material sphere (i.e., all materiality), and aspires to the peace of the formless sphere - the four Formless *Brahmā* realms.
4. *Apariyapanna*: *pañña* knowledge that discerns the evils that pertain to all the three spheres or levels of existence (*bhūmi*) in their three characteristics such as impermanence, etc., and leads one to attain the Path leading to *nibbāna*.

Of those four types, only the last one is of Knowledge par excellence because it is the only knowledge that is going to pull you out of the mire of *sāmsārā*, having comprehended the insecurity of all conditioned things.

The five kinds of Right Understanding:-

1. *Kammassaka sammāditthi*: Right Understanding that holds the correct view that good deeds bring good results or effects, and that bad deeds bring bad results or effects.
2. *Jhāna sammāditthi*: Right Understanding in exerting oneself for attainment of Jhanic concentration through meditation.
3. *Vipassanā sammāditthi*: Right Understanding that discerns the three characteristics in all conditioned things.
4. *Magga sammāditthi*: Right Understanding that penetratingly knows the Four Noble Truths.
5. *Phala sammāditthi*: Right Understanding that gets established in the Fruition Knowledge of the path.

Of the above five, only the three last ones are the really dependable or reliable types.

How To Dispel Personality-belief, How To Overcome Ignorance,

How To Break Up the Linkage Of Craving.

"What kind of knowledge dispels the belief in ego (*sakkāyaditthi*)?" "What kind of knowledge overcomes ignorance?" "What kind of knowledge breaks up the linkage of craving?" Those were the queries put to the Buddha by the *bhikkhus*.

The Buddha's reply, as recorded in *Salāyatāna Samyutta*, is stated in brief here:-

“Sense-bases, Consciousness, Contact, Feeling,

All those are mere conditioned things,

Not belonging to a being, a living entity, a person or self;

No one has actual control over them:

They take their own course.

Meditating on this Truth,

The wrong view of ‘person’ or ego falls off.

Perceiving the Truth of Impermanence,

Ignorance dies out.

The veil of ignorance having lifted,

The enlightened mind craves no more.

With the cessation of craving,

The connecting link of all rebirths,

One enters the Path and its Fruition

Here and now.”

“Men and *devas* relish sensual pleasures, and when pleasure vanishes they are distressed. The *Tathāgata* has learnt to reject all sensuality with the result that when agreeable feelings or sensations disappear no mental pain is caused, there is complete peace.” Thus explained the *Buddha* to the *bhikkhus*.

Why Some Attain The Path Here And Now And Others Do Not: Reply To *Sakka's* Query.

Memorize this verse:

“All worldlings, men or *deva*,

Indulge in the six sense-pleasures

Which are but agreeable feelings

Caused by contact

Between sense - object and sense-base.

Then comes change - as surely it must -

And where's that agreeable thing gone?

O, what annoyance, what worry:

How one is hurt

As though one's heart were to burst:

So, know the Truth

About Sensuality, good or bad,

As mere fleeting phenomena,

Painful, not-self.

Thus will vanish lust for life.

Once lust has left you,

What pain could trouble you,

Physically or mentally?

That is how the *Tathāgata* won

The Supreme Bliss."

(That was the Buddha's reply to *Sakka's* query why some persons won enlightenment here and now, while other did not). See *Salāyatana Samyutta*. (And the Buddha said :)

"Clinging with deep attachment to forms, sounds, smells, tastes, bodily sensations and thoughts as pleasurable, one is a far cry from *nibbāna*, the unconditioned. Only through forsaking such clinging can one realize *nibbāna* here and now."

“**The Wise One”, etc.: attributes of an *arahat* ‘explained’.**

“Who deserves the revered title of *Vedagū*, the Wise One’? And who is a *Sabbajita*, the Conqueror of all foes’? Who is one that has uprooted the cause of evil (lit., *gando*, a boil)?”

To those queries put to the Buddha by the *bhikkhus*, the Buddha’s reply was as follows:-*

“He who comprehends the arising and dissolution of all phenomena at the six sense-bases and who recoils from them, however agreeable they might seem understanding their true character (as impermanent, pain-laden and unreal), perceives that cessation alone is real safety. Perceiving thus, he forsakes all forms of attachment to them. When passion ceases he knows he has attained the peace and freedom of *nibbāna*. Such a Noble One is called *Vedagū*, the Wise One, the Comprehending Sage.

“One who is able to detach himself from all feelings arising through contact at the six sense-bases is called *Sabbajita*, the Conqueror of all foes and all woes?

“Evil (likened to a boil) pertaining to materiality arises on account of the arising of the four primary elements. When one abandons attachment to the physical body, the evil is uprooted.” When craving is totally absent one can attain to *arahattaphala*.

Herein, detachment is the outcome of non-clinging which is the result of overcoming ignorance and wrong view.

* *Salayātana Samyutta, Udaka Sutta*

The six kinds of contact such as eye-contact, etc., arise from contact between eye-base and visual object, etc. The six sets of sense-bases and sense-objects are called *āyatanas* (the former termed ‘internal’, the latter ‘external’). When either the internal or external sphere of sense (*āyatana*) disappears, contact vanishes (instantly) (and sense pertaining to that sense-sphere disappears). Consequently, feeling must disappear. Physically pleasurable feeling (*sukha*) or mentally pleasurable feeling (*somanasssa*), being dependent on contact, are therefore precarious happenings: they are not stable, unsatisfactory and unreal, or impersonal. Seeing their unreality or insubstantiality, the mentally cultivated person forsakes craving as stupid. To such a one, it becomes clear that the only escape lies in forsaking craving and that cessation

of craving is real peace or *nibbāna*. A person of such discernment (i.e., one who has won Path-Knowledge) is called a *vedagū*.

‘Gaining Relief Under the Buddha’s Teaching:

the Significance of the Expression.

“What is the significance of the expression ‘to gain relief under the Teaching’ or ‘to gain supreme relief’?” Asked the Venerable *Jambukhadaka* of the Venerable *Sāriputta*.

The Venerable *Sāriputta* explained:-

“The relief at the first stage begins when one understands rightly the cause of the arising of contact at the six sense-bases, their vanishings, their pleasant aspects side by side with their dangerous aspects; as well as the escape from them through Path-Knowledge that leads to *nibbāna*.

“Further, the second greater (supramundane) relief comes when one abandons craving and wrong view.”

Herein, the first relief is gaining right understanding from outside source, i.e., by being taught by another, or acquiring hearsay knowledge (*suta*). It lands one to a ‘Junior’ Stream-entrant, (*cūlasotapanna*) states: When Path-Knowledge is attained to through insight, and craving associated with wrong view (*ditthigata sampayutta*) has been abandoned completely, one becomes a full-fledged Stream-entrant (*mahā-sotāpanna*). This is called gaining the second relief.

Herein, the way the Path-Knowledge is realized may be re-stated:-

One comes to understand that contact arises due to the (six) sense-bases: when sense-base ceases, contact ceases. Pleasure, whether physical or mental, is some agreeable sort of feeling arising out of contact that is clung to by the multitude lacking right understanding.

The wise see the dangers behind those enjoyments of pleasurable feeling, knowing their instability or changeableness, their painfulness, their unreality and thereby gain release from the round of rebirths. Such release, *nissaranattha*, is indeed *nibbāna*.

“How *Dukkha* Arises; How It Ceases’ -

the Buddha’s Discourse to *Bhadrakagamani*.

Bhadrakagāmani, Headman of a village, asked of the Buddha: ‘Venerable Sir, what is the cause of suffering (*dukkha*)? And how can it be ended?” The Buddha replied, “*Dukkha* is caused by desire and lust (*chanda rāga*): if one rejects lustful desire one can put an end to sorrow (*dukkha*).”

The Buddha elucidated this as follows:-

If one were to be told of what happened in the past and why, one could not perceive the truth since it has passed away. If, on the other hand, one were to be told of what is going to happen in future and why, one may be in doubt, for he has not seen the events yet. Therefore, talking about the immediate present is the most appropriate for discernment. How did you feel about the fortunes befalling the mother of your boy *Cīravāsī* (i.e., your wife) before you had set your eyes upon her?”

“I would not have cared a bit, Venerable Sir.”

“What about now?”

“I feel greatly concerned, Venerable Sir, I feel myself deeply bound to her so that her weal or woe would be felt by me very deeply indeed, Sir: Besides, just now, I feel great anxiety over my boy *Cīravāsī* whom I sent on an errand to town and has failed to get home in time.”

The Buddha pointed out that he, the Headman, was under mental suffering on account of wife and child just because he let himself be bound to them by his own attachment to them. This is nothing but craving coupled with wrong view that acts as strong fetters to one who craves. If one abandons attachment, one is freed from sorrow, anxiety and all forms of suffering. The right way to give up craving is to view meditatively that the five aggregates, the six sense-bases, are all impermanent, painful and not-self. Viewing thus, those three characteristics will become duly impressed on one’s consciousness. Craving or attachment then thins out and ultimately fades away. When craving coupled with wrong view falls off, the fetters are broken, the path is attained to, and *nibbāna* realized.

(See the story in *Bhadraka Sutta, Salāyatana Samyutta Nikāya*).

Now, memorize these (verses) lines:-

“Unconcerned though we are by weal or woe

Befalling total strangers,

Yet why do we shake with concern

When our dear ones rise or sink in life?

Craving, to be sure, is what makes the difference:

‘Tis craving that creates our own bondage.

Yes, craving is the root of all suffering,

Time and time again.

Just in the same way,

When one is deeply attached to this body

Of the five aggregates,

Clinging dearly as one’s self,

All sorrows arise.

When such clinging is dropped,

All sorrows vanish.”

The Five Aggregates Are Like A Disease That Demands Constant Care.

“*Rogoviya dukkha saccam*”, says the Commentary (*VisuddhiMagga*). This is expanded in verse below:

“Much fuss and trouble, *sankhāra dukkha*,

This body of the five aggregates entails,

Just like contracting a disease.

Not a moment of peace:

Ever oppressed by fiery passion,

Malice and bad motives surge in the heart--

Veritable diseases:

To assuage the pain,
One tries to console oneself
To forget the heart burnings--
Only to get momentary relief, at best.
Corruption of the elements within,
Causing now hunger, now thirst,
Now feeling cold, now hot:
Or harassed by mosquitoes, flies, insects,
Pests or poisonous snakes and the like,
One must take care to fend for oneself -
All these harassments, within and without,
One has to put up a bold front against,
Willy-nilly, with success, often without success.
So long as the *khandhās* are present
This *dukkha* is there, to be sure.
Only with the extinction of the *khandhās*.
Is eternal bliss found.
As Right Understanding grasps Knowledge,
Craving is cast away,
Clinging and *kamma* fade out;
Then and then only, this perpetual disease
Of the presence of the aggregates
Is cured completely
And the birthlessness of *nibbāna* entered."

On Dispelling the Belief in Self or Ego

"How is personality-belief or belief in self (*sakkāyaditthi*) dispelled?" That was the question for which the *bhikkhus* wanted to know the answer. And the Buddha explained to them:-

"View the six sense-objects, the six sense-bases, the six kinds of consciousness, the six forms of contact or impingement that cause six sources of feelings, as not-self, not under one's actual control, not at one's disposal. When you comprehend this *anatta* character in these things in their true light ('as they really are'), *Sakkāyaditthi* disappears.

When the delusion of a false ego is dispelled thus, one attains to Stream-entry and its Fruition."

Those six sets of *dhammas* are beyond anyone's control: that is why all of us have to age, to fall ill, and to die, when insight is gained into this fact there remains no doubt whatever about their not-self nature, (*anatta*). Freedom from doubt leads to Stream-entry. (See *Sakkāya Sutta, Salāyatāna Samyutta*).

Not Knowing the Truth, *Samsarā* Grinds On;

Knowing the Truth, *Samsarā* Is Stopped.

Rebirth and all woes are perpetuated by ignorance;

When the Truth is seen by the eye of Knowledge,

Rebirth is stopped,

The Four Noble Truths of

Dukkha, its cause, its cessation,

And the Path, remain unseen

Being vetted by ignorance,

So the worldling gropes about

In *samsāra's* blind alleys, endlessly.

When the Four Truths are discerned,

The round of rebirths is brought to a close.

Since beginning-less *samsārā*,

Birth, ageing and death have been occurring.

The true culprit is found in Ignorance

That hides the Four Truths,

Forever misleading you -

To nowhere.

Now that you know the culprit, Ignorance,

Make capital out of this knowledge;

Use your eye of knowledge for liberation:

Who Causes *Dukkha*? No One: Only Ignorance Is To Blame.

A certain Brahmin asked the Buddha who is responsible for the world's woes. The Buddha's reply was, there is no one that brings woes to the world: only one's ignorance is to blame.

Sayam katam dukkham bhante. Na sayam katam dukkham brahmana. Udāhu param katam dukkham bhante. Na param katam dukkham brahmana. Udāhu ubhayam katam dukkham bhante. Na ubhayam kalām brahmana. Atthi nu kho natthi nu kho dukkham bhanbte. Na kho brahmana natthi dukkham. Atthi kho brahmana dukkham. Kīm pana etam dukkham bhante. Sunohi brahmana avijjā paccayā sankhāra, sankhāra paccayā viññanam, viññanana paccayaā nāmarupam, nāmarūpa paccayā salāyatanam, salayatana paccayā phasso, phassā paccayā vedanā, vedanā paccayā taṇhā, taṇha paccayā upādānam, upādāna paccayā bhavo, bhavapaccayā jāti, jāti

paccayā jarāmarana soka parideva domanassupāyāsā sambhavanti. Evametassa kevalassa dukkakhhandhassa samudayo hotīti.

(Brahmin's Question) **:** "Venerable Sir, is *dukkha* one's own doing?"

(Buddha's Answer) **:** "No, Brahmin, it is not."

(Brahmin's Question) **:** "Is it some one else's doing?"

(Buddha's Answer) **:** "No, Brahmin, it is not."

(Brahmin's Question) **:** "Then is it the doing both by oneself and by another?"

(Buddha's Answer) **:** "No, Brahmin, it is not."

(Brahmin's Question) **:** "If so, is there no *dukkha* (in the world)?"

(Buddha's Answer) **:** "No, Brahmin, it is not that *dukkha* is not there (in the world): of course, it is there."

(Brahmin's Question) **:** "How is it, Venerable Sir?

(Buddha's Answer) **:** "Now, listens Brahmin: through ignorance (of the Four Truths and the Law of Dependent Origination) arise volitional activities (i.e., activities that produce rebirth in the fortunate existences with materiality including man, *deva* and five material *Brahmā lokas*; the four miserable states of *apāya*; or the formless *Brahmā lokas*, or, in another way, volitions that inspire good or bad thoughts, words and deeds); through volitional activities, arise consciousness; - - - (p.) Through clinging arises becoming; through becoming arises birth; through birth arise grief, lamentation, pain, sorrow and anguish. In this manner, the whole mass of sheer suffering, the arising of this round of sufferings, is originated."

(The above is the Law of Dependent Origination, *Paticcasamuppāda*).

How *dukkha* and craving reciprocate themselves will be further explained below.

How the Wheel of Existences, *Samsarā*, Is Stopped: A Simile.

“Through Craving, *dukkha* arises;

Abandon Craving, and *dukkha* ceases.

With the tap-root intact,

The tree thrives again.

Cut off the tap-root,

And the tree withers away.”

The Endless Process of Rebirths, *Samsarā*

Through craving as cause,

The five aggregates arise;

And with the aggregates as basis,

Craving thrives.

The two reciprocating factors

Do perpetuate *samsarā*.

Just like the seed-germ

That produces the tree

Which in turn bears the seed - germ,

Only to perpetuate itself.

The Buddha’s Reply to *Suciloma* the Demon

Once *Suciloma* the Demon confronted the Buddha with the question: ‘where do passion, anger, delusion, boredom and delight spring from?’ The Buddha answered

that they (and all other defilements) grew on one's body, just as the hanging roots of the banyan thrive on the tree's trunk. Craving arises depending on the five aggregates which themselves are indeed the result of past craving. This present existence, belonging as it does to the unsatisfactory and uncontrollable round of rebirths is truly painful; yet it is not understood as *dukkha*. Hence, through the present existence there arises a fresh growth of defilements such as lust, hate, delusion, etc. Through ignorance or delusion (*avijjā*) and volitional actions (*sankhāra*), (i.e., the round of defilements and the round of *kamma*), which are the causes of the present existence composed of consciousness, mentality-materiality, six sense-bases, contact, and feeling. This is the resultant of previous *kammic* actions which is *dukkha* in truth. With this present set of resultants craving for pleasant or agreeable feelings arise which are relished as one's personal enjoyments of life. They are looked upon with great attachment so that they become obsessions. Thus clinging to them, the process of becoming is caused. This is a fresh condition for further existence. In this way the present resultant (of past *kamma*) becomes the cause of future rebirth. This is the Law of Dependent Origination. This is the simile of the hanging-roots that thrive on the banyan trunk.

Memorize the following (verse):-

With this body as their basis,

There grow lust, hate, delusion,

The seeds of future *dukkha*.

"This like the hanging roots

That grows from the trunk of the banyan tree.

Seeing this, don't let your present body

Become a fresh source of *dukkha*:

Cut off craving, the tap-root of existence;

When craving goes, further existence cannot be.

The Buddha further gave an example: Just as the giant creeper coils up entangling everything around the tree on which it grows, the defilements arising from the body entangle you. To kill the creeper, the tree on which it grows needs to be uprooted.

Cherishing this body as one's own,

Delighting in the sensual pleasures,

One gets entangled by lust, hate, delusion,

Sure seeds for rebirth, a fresh round of woes,

Just like the entangled by the giant creeper.

Viewing this body

As the potential basis for future woes

To be brought through rebirth,

Reject lust, hate, and delusion.

When passion ceases

Future existence cannot be.

This, the Buddha's answer,

Enlightened *Suciloma* the tough questioner.*

The Difference Between A Worldling And An *Ariyā* Who Has Won The First Path (*Sotāpanna*).

The worldling is a most precarious creature of his own blunders, for he is all the time liable to the hazards of rebirth, ageing, disease, death, and a mass of

* 'The tough questioner', because *Suciloma* the demon threatened the Buddha to "break open your heart (etc.)" if the Buddha could not answer his questions. *Suciloma* become a Stream-winner on hearing the discourse. - *Sutta Nipāta, Khuddaka Nikāya*; also in *Sagāthā Vagga Samyutta*.

troubles, craving endlessly in his *samsaric* way, When one gets enlightenment as the First Stage and becomes a *Sotāpanna*, one is precluded from falling to the four miserable states and is assured of the seven fortunate kinds of existences. Rebirth is limited to seven times only. More important, the Knowledge of the Path has been so well established in the consciousness that in whatever circumstances he might be born, he has innate wisdom to realize the Four Noble Truths. Without needing to be taught by another, he can steer his way to spiritual enlightenment as an *arahat*. This

is the most crucial advantage, for a worldling (however glorious he might be born) needs some teacher to teach him the Four Truths. Again, the Stream-winner conducts his way with cessation of rebirth his sole objective (unlike the worldling who is enamored of glorious future existences). He understands things rightly, he thinks rightly, he refrains from the three evil bodily deeds, and from the four evil verbal actions, he is free from wrong view (more particularly of 'self'), he lives on an evil-free livelihood. In short, the noble Eightfold Path is constantly his standard of conduct.

There are lay disciples who win Stream-entry. They still do not forsake family life. But even though not very markedly different from the worldling in outward appearance, the Stream-winner is vastly different. He knows that passion must be abandoned even when he indulges in it in a cautious and restrained way. He sets his mind on getting rid of all forms of attachment. Such noble ideals hardly bother a worldling.

For Stream-entry Knowledge, Ascetism Is Not Necessary.

For the enlightenment at the First stage of the Path the necessary conditions are to abandon wrong view (*ditthi*) and doubt (*vicikicchā*). These defilements can very well be exhausted by lay disciples. One may not leave hearth and home and enter ascetic life. Acquiring the necessary knowledge from some competent teacher should suffice. The oft-repeated threefold method of '*sīla' Samādhi*, *pañña* morality, concentration, knowledge - may be adhered to by those who are favourably circumstanced. But for the vast majority of right-thinking Buddhists, an initial insight into the Four Noble Truths is the immediate need which will duly place them onto the Path, thus conforming to the above-said three fold training.

There have been many instances, in the days of the Buddha, of lay disciples who attained to Stream-entry in spite of their ignoble backgrounds in life: to wit, *Ariyā* the fisherman, or a pickpocket, or five hundred robbers. They gained insight into the Four Noble Truths and entered the Path, and then gave up their bad ways, in compliance with the *ariyā's* mode of training (i.e., the threefold training). They escaped, as a result of First-Path-Knowledge, the eight hazards of the lot of the worldling: namely, birth, ageing, disease, death, the (four) miserable states, the inheritance of previous *kamma* or the round of resultants flowing from the past, the commitment into future rebirth or the round of resultants projecting into the future, and the necessity for livelihood (which in most cases is fraught with evil).

Further elucidation: - Practice of the *Dhamma* is aimed at killing the evils of lust, hate and delusion. Sensual lust, (*kāmarāga*), ill will (*vyāpāda*) and distractedness (*uddhacca*) are three milder evils that that a lay disciple may find it practically rather

hard to abandon. Of the three basic evils of lust (*rāga*), hate (*dosa*) and delusion (*moha*), the last (delusion) should be got rid of as the first condition for Knowledge. This may very well be achieved under the guidance of a good teacher conversant in the Four Noble Truths and competent to teach. Although an ascetic life as a recluse, or giving up one's livelihood or assigning oneself to meditative sessions, are commendable indeed, they, however, do not make the sine qua non or essential requirements for the First Path-Knowledge. Getting rid of delusion or ignorance is the first requirement.

The Four Conditions Necessary for Gaining Stream-entry

The Buddha said (*vide Pāthika Vagga*, *Dīgha Nikāya*):- *Cattārimāni bhikkhave sotāpattyangāni katamāni cattāri. Sappurisasamsevo saddhammas savanam yonisomanasikāro dhammānudhammapatipattīti.*

"O you worldlings, desirous of release from the troublesome round of rebirths: these are the four conditions that are necessary for attaining Stream-entry: namely, association with (or attending to) those conversant with the *Dhamma* (i.e., who have understood mental-material aggregates and the Four Noble Truths); taking instructions from those who have gained insight into those *dhammas*; cultivating a free mind to discern things as they truly are; and practicing the *Dhamma* in accordance with the Teaching (i.e., striving to discard personality-belief, *sakkāya-ditthi*, the main requisite for enlightenment)."

In a nutshell:-

"1. Approach the virtuous ones for guidance;

2. Listen to the *Dhamma* often;

3. Keep an unbiased or open mind;

4. Conform to the Path by casting aside the ego.

These four factors do make a Stream-winner."

The Twelve Constituents of the Law of

Dependent Origination, *Paticca samuppāda.*

The Law of Dependent Origination is the *Dhamma* that needs to be comprehended because it dispels the sixteen uncertainties, destroys the eight doubts, and throws Light on the Four Noble Truths.

Avijjāpaccayā sankhārā, sankhārapaccayā viññanam viññāna paccayā - nāmarūpam, nāmarūpaccayā salāyātanam, salāyatanapaccayā phasso, phassapaccayā vedanā, viddānapaccayā taṇhā, taṇhā paccayā upādānā, upādānapaccayā bhavo, bhavapaccayā jāti, jātipaccayā jarāmarana sokaparideva dukkha domanassupāyāsā sambhavanti. Evametassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa samudayo hotīti. - Vibbanga, etc.

The above Pali has in part been translated previously. Definitions of the terms in this passage now follow:-

The Characteristics, etc., of Dependent Origination

Jarāmananādhīnam paccayalakkhano paticcasamuppādo dukkha anubhdhana raso kummaggapaccupatthāno āsavapadatthāno. - VisddhiMagga.

"The Law of Dependent Origination is characterized by its being the origin or source of ageing, death and all sorts of sorrow; its function is to be closely bound to *dukkha* (that being with rebirth); it is manifested as the tortuous path; its proximate cause lies in the cankerous or tainted state of mind (*āsava*)."

N.B.: *Jarāmarana*, the result or effort, is (*paticca samuppanna*) *Jāti*, the cause of (*jarāmarana*) is *paticcasamuppāda*.

The Characteristic, etc., of the twelve constituents of Dependent Origination.

Aññālakkhanā avijjā sammohanarasā chādana paccupatthānā āsava padatthanā. (- Ibid.)

"Not-knowing (lack of knowledge of the Four Truths and Dependent origination is the character of ignorance (*avijja*); perplexity about those *dhammas* is its (*avijjā's*) function; concealing the reality of the sense-object is its manifestation the cankerous state of mind is its near cause."

Ignorance has been likened to a blind person.

Abhisankhāralakkhanā sankhārā āyūhanarasā cetanapaccupatthānā avijjapadatthana.

"Conditioned things (*sankharā*) have the character of productivity; their function is to exert; they are manifested as volition or will; ignorance is their proximate cause."

Viññānalakkhanam viññānam pubbangama rasam patisandhipaccu patthānam sankhārapadatthānam.

Consciousness (*viññāna*) has the character of knowing the object of sense; its function is to lead the mental properties or mental concomitants; it is manifested as the link between death (*cuti*) and rebirth (*patisandhi*); conditioned states are its proximate cause."

Namanalakkhanam nāmam sampayogarasam avinibhogapaccupat thānam viññānapadatthānam. (Ibid.)

Mentality or the fifty-two mental concomitants (*nāma*) has the character of attending to or inclining (bending) to the sense-object; its function is to co-ordinate itself with the mind (*citta*); it is manifested as being part and parcel of the mind; consciousness is its near cause."

N.B.:- *Citta* or *viññāna* are used interchangeably: "*cittam viññānakkhandho*." (Ibid.)

Ruppanalakkhanam rūpam vikiranarasam avyākata paccupatthānam viññāna padatthānam. (Ibid.)

Materiality (*rūpa*) is characterized by corruptibility (such as through heat or cold, etc.); its function is to disintegrate; it is manifested as being insensate; consciousness is its near cause."

"*Ruppanalakkhanam rūpanti ettha sītena pi ruppati unhenapi ruppati jigacchāya pi rupphati pipāsāya pi ruppati dansa makasa vātātapa sarīsapa samphassenāpi ruppati*." - *Nidāna Vagga*, *Samyutta Nikāya*

"Herein, by corruptibility is meant that materiality is adversely affected by cold or heat, by hunger or thirst, or by contact with all sorts of external agencies such as gadfly, mosquito, fly, wind, heat of the sun, snake, scorpion, lice, etc."

Ayatanalakkhanānam salāyatanam dassanādirasam vatthudvārabhā vapaccpatthānam nāmarūpapadattnānam. - VisuddhiMagga

“The six sense-bases (*salāyatana*) such as eye, etc., have the character of stretching (*āyamati*) the mind and mental concomitants (or, in another sense, they have the character of extending rebirth); their function is to see, to hear, to smell, to taste, to touch; they are manifested as sense-objects and sense-doors; mind-and-body (matter), *nāma-rūpa*, is their near cause.”

Ayatana : *āya* + *tana*

Tam tam dvārārammanesu cittacetasikadhammā āyanti pavattantīti āyā. Ayasankāte cittacetasike dhamme tāni cakkhurupadini tanonti vittarenti āyatanāni.

“Towards those sense-objects such as visual object, etc., the mind and mental concomitants are drawn, or are caused to appear: hence they are called ‘to draw’, *āya*. (Again), those six sense-organs and sense-objects such as eye and visual object have a way of stretching or drawing the mind and mental concomitants that have the quality of being drawn (*āya*). It is on these two accounts that they are called ā*yatana’s* or sense-bases.

(Also): *Aye tanoti āyatañca nayatīti āyatanam*.

“Because they stretch the mind and mental concomitants (*āya*) and because they carry (the mind) to the extended stretch of *samsaric* journey, they are called *āyatanas*.”

Herein, *tana* refers to the sense-bases and the six sense-objects, *āya* refers to the mind and mental concomitants. The two have the nature of extending *samsāra*. Hence *āyatana*.

Phusanalakkhano phasso sanghattāna raso sangatipaccupatthāno āyatāna padatthāno. - *VisuddhiMagga*

Contact (*phassa*) has the character of touching the sense-object; its function is to knock against or to impinge upon the sense-door or sense-base; it is manifested in the union or intercourse between sense-object and sense-base; its near cause lies in the sense-bases.

Contact and feeling (*vedanā*) are exemplified thus:-

Agginā phutthassa phasso;

Dāhoviya dukkhavedanā.

“Contact may be likened to exposure to fire; unpleasant feeling may be likened to scorching.”

The above example explains the relationship between the six sense-bases and the six sense-objects respectively.

Anubhavanalakkhanā vedanā vissyarasa sambhogarasā sukhadukkhā paccupatthānā phassa padatthānā.

Feeling (*vedanā*) has the character of following the sensation closely; its function is to have sensual enjoyment; it is manifested as either pleasant or painful; contact is its near cause."

Hetulakkhanā taṇhā abhinandanarasā atittipacupatthnānā vedanā pada tthānā. (Ibid.)

"Craving (*taṇhā*) has the character of serving as cause; its function is deep satisfaction or great delight; it is manifested as being insatiable; feeling is its near cause."

Gahanalakkhanam upādānam amuñcana rasam taṇhādaḷhattha ditthipaccupatthānam taṇhā padatthānam. - Ibid.

Clinging (*upādāna*) has the character of taking up the sense-object; its function is to hold (the sense-object) fast, (lit., 'not letting go', *amuñcana*), like the cat that has caught its mouse; it is manifested as being steeped in attachment associated with wrong view;" craving is its near cause."

Kamma kammaphalalakkhano bhavo bhavanabhāvana raso kusalākusa lavyakatapaccupatthāno upādānapadatthāno.

"Becoming or the process of becoming (*bhāvo*) has the character of *kamma* and *kamma's* resultant; its function is twofold: to cause as well as to be caused; it is manifested in three ways: meritorious, demeritorious or neutral; clinging is it's near cause."

Pathamābhinibbatti lakkhanā jāti niyyātana rasā atātabhavato idha ummujjanapaccupatthānā bhavapadatthānā. (Ibid.)

Birth (*jāti*) has the character of first appearance in the new existence; its function is to pass on (the *kammic* process of becoming); it is manifested as though the past existence has emerged again into the present; the process of becoming (*bhava*) is its near cause."

The Four Profundities of Dependent Origination In A Nutshell

1. Profound in meaning i.e., in the effect of a cause; (e.g.) that it is due to ignorance that volitional actions arise; that it is due to birth that ageing and death occur;

2. Profound in *dhamma* i.e., in revealing the cause: profundity to understand the law of causality or origination (e.g., *avijjāsankhāra* causality; *jāti-jarāmarana* causality;

3. Profound in presentation or teaching: sometimes in forward order, sometimes in backward order, sometimes from the middle, etc.

4. Profound in penetration.

The Four Profundities Explained

In *Mahā Vagga, Dīgha Nikāya,* the four profundities of *Paticca samuppāda* or Dependent Origination are stated as four, namely: It is profound (1) in meaning, (2) in *dhamma*, (3) in teaching, (4) in penetration. The Commentary on *Mahā Vagga* explains this as follows:-

Re. (1) It is profound in meaning: (for instance) ageing and death occur again and again when birth is the condition; and volitional activities have ignorance as their condition. They are said to be profound in meaning in the sense that the result (*attha*) of the cause is precisely shown.

Re. (2): It is profound in *dhamma* means: the manner and the circumstances under which ignorance is the condition for volitional activities is profound i.e., profundity as to cause (*dhamma*). Similarly, birth (*jāti*) as condition for ageing and death is profound.

Re. (3): It is profound as to teaching:- In certain discourses the Buddha explains the Law of Dependent Origination in forward order, in some in backward order, in some from the middle, and then, too, sometimes in forward order, sometimes in backward order; and then in certain cases both forward and backward order; in some the three linkages, the four sections, whereas in others the two linkages, the three sections; and still in others one linkage and two sections.

Re. (4): It is profound in penetration:- Because the perception of ignorance as unknowing, unseeing things (i.e., Sense-objects) correctly, and non-penetration of the Four Truths is profound.

So is the perception of volitional actions as willed efforts, storing up *kamma* with or without lust.

So is the perception of consciousness as not-self (hollowness), disinterestedness, non-transmigration and rebirth-linking.

So is the perception of mentality-materiality as conascent arising (becoming simultaneously), as resolved into components or not, as attending to sense-objects, and being adversely affected by opposite (opposing) conditions.

So is the perception of the six sense-bases as primacy, as the way of the world, as doors to sense-objects, as fields where contact grows into sensitivity, and as proprietor (possessor) of such 'sense-fields'.

So is the perception of contact as touching, as impingement, as intercourse, as concurrence.

So is the perception of feeling as experiencing the sensation, as pleasure, or pain, or neutral, as devoid of any self or soul or life, as (mere fact of) what is fact.

So is the perception of craving as delighting in, as fully taken up or committed, as river's current, in the sense of being carried away or getting soaked up through and through by it, as creeper that entangles beings, as a river constantly flowing, as the ocean hard to fill.

So is the perception of clinging as grasping, seizing, misconception, delusion, and hard to overcome.

So is the perception of becoming as accumulating the *kammic* actions associated with given sets of volitions, forming, and flinging into the various destinies such as the four kinds or modes of conception*, the five classes of destination (lit., 'courses of existence') (*gāti*),** the seven stations of conscious-ness,# the nine categories of abode.##

So is the perception of birth as being born, as being completely born (*sanjati*), as conception (as if descent into the mother's womb), as manifestation through rebirth.

So is the perception of ageing and death as being used up, as going out of existence, as breaking up, as change or corruption.

Those are the innate qualities or nature of ignorance and the other constituents of *Paticca samuppāda*. Their respective characteristics and specific qualities should be known with penetration. This kind of penetration is profound.

* ‘Four kinds of rebirth’; (*yoni*): born from egg, from mother’s womb, from moisture, instantaneous birth as a full-grown person.

** ‘Five classes of destination’, (*gati*): torturous realms of retribution, animal kingdom, ghost-realm, human world, celestial world of *devas*.

‘The seven station of consciousness’, (*viññānatthiti*); ‘the place where consciousness is;. Each station (or area) covers one or more realms of existence. The seven, together with the two spheres (ā*yatanas*), cover all the 31 realms or planes of existence.

‘The nine categories of abode’, (*sattāvāsa*): a technical term under which all sentient beings are classified. Parallel in concept with *Viññānatthiti*.

Dependent Origination In Reverse Order as

Taught to the Venerable *Ananda*.

“*Ananda*, if the cause of ageing and death be asked into, birth should be pointed out. If the cause of birth be asked into, becoming should be pointed out. If the cause of becoming be asked into, clinging should be pointed out. If the cause of clinging be asked into, craving should be pointed out. If the cause of craving be asked into, feeling should be pointed out. If the cause of feeling be asked into, contact should be pointed out. If the cause of contact be asked into, mentality-materiality should be pointed out. If the cause of mentality-materiality be asked into, consciousness should be pointed out. If the cause of consciousness be asked into, mentality-materiality should be pointed out. Thus consciousness is caused by mentality-materiality and mentality-materiality is caused by consciousness. Contact is caused by mentality-materiality. And Through contact feeling arises; through feeling craving arises; through craving arise clinging, becoming, birth, ageing, death.

Viewing from the cessation aspect:-

If there be no birth (in any of the 31 planes) there need not be any ageing or death. Birth truly is the origin of ageing and death. It is the cause. It is the condition. Because there have been *kammic* process or becoming (of any one of the three types productive of *kama*, *rupa* - or *arupa bhavas*), that there is birth. If there be no *kammic* accumulation or becoming, there need not be any rebirth. Because there have been clinging (clinging to sensuality, clinging to wrong view, clinging to conduct and rituals) that there is becoming. If there had been no clinging there would not be any process of becoming (*bhava*). Clinging is the origin of becoming. It is the cause. It is the condition.

Because there is craving, there arises clinging. How? Craving for the six sense-objects is the origin of clinging. If craving is cut off, there can arise no clinging. Craving is the cause of clinging.

Because there is feeling, there arises craving. How? Through contact arising from eye-consciousness --- (p-) contact arising from mind-consciousness, feeling arises. If those feelings cease, there can arise no craving. Feeling is the source of craving. It is the origin. It is the condition.

How Craving For Pleasant Feeling Entails the Ten Kinds of Ill

Pleasurable feeling causes craving; craving causes accumulation (of objects of craving); because one accumulates, one has possessions; having possessed of wealth, one decides that they are one's own; having so decided, one has passionate attachment to those possessions; this attachment cause clinging to them as one's property; clinging leads to possessiveness; possessiveness leads to covetousness; being covetous, one protects his wealth jealously; guarding the wealth jealously, one meets with friction with others so that disputes arise; in the course of disputes, quarrels involving unwholesome thoughts, words and deeds are committed. Those unwholesome action cause him to fall into the four miserable states.

The Ten Ills (above) In The Reverse Order Of Contemplation

Because one covets, one protects one's wealth; if there is no covetousness, there need not be any protection.

Because there is possessiveness, there is covetousness; if there is no possessiveness, there is no covetousness.

Because one clings to the property as one's own, there is possessiveness; if there is no clinging, there is no possessiveness. Because there is strong attachment to the property, there arises clinging. If there is no attachment, no clinging arises.

Because one decides that this property is his, attachment to them arises; if there is no such decision, no attachment arises.

Because there have been acquisition or accumulation, there arises ownership of property, there is no accumulation, there will be no property.

Because one seeks wealth that one acquires them; if there is no search for property, there is no acquisition.

Because there is attachment of the pleasant feeling, there arises craving; if one disregards pleasurable feeling, no craving arises.

Because there is craving, one sets out searching for more pleasure (in the form of material possession, etc.). If there is no craving, there is no searching for them.

Because one seeks wealth, one acquires it; if one does not seek wealth, one does not acquire it.

Contemplating in the Forward Order

Because there is feeling, there is delight in the pleasant feeling; when feeling ceases, there is no delight.

Because there is contact, there is feeling; when contact ceases, no feeling arises.

Because there is mentality-materiality, there is contact; when mentality-materiality ceases, no contact arises.

Because there is rebirth-consciousness (conception), there arises mentality-materiality; if there is no consciousness, there is no mentality-materiality.

At the moment of conception, rebirth-consciousness is the cause; mentality-materiality the result. However, consciousness and mentality-materiality arise simultaneously. Consciousness is the decisive factor, though.

The Buddha said "*Ananda*, to that extent consciousness and mentality-materiality are reciprocal: they come into being together, they age together, they die together, and they move on together, they start a fresh set of aggregates, i.e., take rebirth together. Through their reciprocity, the round of rebirths and the five aggregates are perpetuated."

Contemplating Dependent Origination In Its Forty-four Aspects As Per *PatisambhidāMagga*.

Dependent Origination may be made the Bases of Knowledge (ñā*na vatthu*) in forty-four ways as follows:-

1. Through birth, aging, disease and death arise, accompanied by a mass of sufferings; when birth ceases, ageing, death, etc., cease altogether.

2. Through *kamma-bhava* or the process of becoming, birth arises; when becoming ceases, rebirth ceases.

3. Through clinging, the process of becoming arises; when clinging ceases becoming ceases.

4. Through craving, clinging arises; when craving ceases clinging ceases.

5. Through feeling, craving arises; then feeling ceases, craving ceases.

6. Through contact, feeling arises; when contact ceases feeling ceases.

7. Through the six sense-bases, contact arises; when the six sense-bases cease, contact ceases.

8. Through mentality-materiality, the six sense-bases arise; when mentality-materiality ceases six sense-bases cease.

9. Through consciousness, mentality-materiality arises; when consciousness ceases, mentality-materiality ceases.

10. Through volitional actions, consciousness arises; when consciousness ceases, volitional actions cease.

11. Through ignorance, volitional actions arises when ignorance ceases volitional actions cease.

12. Thus the cause is there to bring about the resultant misfortune at each step (constituent) of Dependent Origination. When Right Understanding of this truth is perceived through insight-knowledge, ignorance vanishes: that means enlightenment is won, deathlessness or *nibbāna* achieved.

In *Patisambhidā Magga* it is stated as:

Jarāmarane ñanam jarāmaranasamudaye ñānam

Jarāmarana nirodhe ñānam jarāmarana nirodhagā -

minīpatipadāya ñānam.

For each constituent of Dependent Origination the four truths are thus discernible, thereby making forty-four bases of knowledge.

When Things Are Properly Attended To,

Merit Accrues; Otherwise Demerit Results.

In *Anguttara Nikāya*, we have:

Yoniso bhikkhave manasikaroto anuppannā ceva kusalādhammā uppajjanti uppannā ca akusalā dhamma parihāyanti.

"*Bhikkhus*, in whom things are properly attended to, (i.e., when things are viewed in their reality that mentality-materiality are impermanent, painful and unreal or impersonal, that they are ugly or detestable) there arises supramundane merit (i.e., knowledge) that has not arisen in him before, while demerit that has accrued also wanes."

> (N.B., -In the above rendering from original *Pali*, the significance of Right Effort, *sammāvāyama*, has been included).
>
> Improper attending to things have the opposite effect:
>
> *Ayoniso bhikkhave manasikaroto anuppannā ceva akusalā dhammā uppajjanti upannā ca kusalā dhammā parihāyanti*. (Ibid.)

"*Bhikkhus*, in whom things are improperly attended to (i.e., viewing impermanent things as being permanent, painful things as being pleasurable, impersonal things as being personal, detestable things as being agreeable), there arises demerit not arisen before, while merit already earned also decreases."

Sabbepi kusalā dhammā yonisomanasikāramūlakā.

Sabbepi akusalādhammā ayonisomanasikāra mūlakā.

- *VisuddhiMagga.*

"All merit, mundane as well as supramundane, is rooted in proper attending to things; all demerits are rooted in improper attending to things."

The truth of these words is obvious. As one has the correct view of things pleasant or unpleasant, one gains knowledge, i.e., merit (of supramundane type). If viewed improperly, one contemplates, "I too, am as detestable within as this corpse", and thereby gains knowledge which is supramundane merit. If, instead, one were to feel

nauseated and allow oneself to be angry about the matter, this, of course, is demeritorious. Again, if one comes across people getting on well in life and feels glad about those fortunate persons, one earns merit being able to have the noble attitude of *muditā*. If he were to feel jealous of them, he earns demerit, having allowed himself the demeritorious attitude of hate. In these ways one should understand how any given situation may be either an occasion for merit or demerit as one views thing.

The Eight Kinds of Doubt

To attain to the supramundane, the crucial point lies in dispelling doubt, *Dhammasangani* Commentary explains:-

Tattha katamā vicikicchā. Sattāri kankhati vicikicchati. Dhamme kankhati vicikicchati sanghe kanvhati vicikicchati sekkhāya kankhati vicikicchati pubbente kankhati vicikicchati aparante kankhati vicikicchati pubbantāparante kankhati vicikicchati. Idappaccayatā paticcasamuppannesu dhammesu kankhati vicikicchatīti.

Sattari kankhatīti sattu sarīre vā gune vā ubhayattha vā kankhati sarīre kankhamāno dvuttimsavaralakkhanappatipanditam nāma sarīram atthi nu kho natthīti kankhati. Gune kankhamano atitānāgatapaccuppanna jānana samattham sabbaññutañānam atthi nu kho natthī ti kankhati. Ubhayattha kankhamāno asīti anubyañjanabyamappabhanurañhitāya sarīranibbattiyā samannāgato subbañeyyajānanāsamattham sabbaññutañānam pativajjhitvā thito lokatārako buddhonāma atthi nu kho ñatthīti kankhati ayañyissa attabhāve gune vā kankhato ubhayattha kankhati nāma.

1. Doubts about the Teacher (the Buddha):

One doubts about the person of the Buddha or the attributes of the Buddha or both. One who has doubts about the Buddha’s person or body asks himself: is the Buddha’s person naturally endowed with the thirty-two marks of the excellent man, or is it not? One who has doubts about the Buddha’s attributes asks himself: is the Buddha really endowed with the All-knowing wisdom that is said to know everything pertaining to the past, the present and the future, or is he not? One who has doubts both about the person and the attributes asks himself: is there such a personality as the Buddha who is said to possess eighty lesser marks of the excellent man, with an aura that projects itself a yoke - length around his person: who is

endowed with knowledge about every knowable thing; who stands in actual command of (lit., 'who penetrates') the All-knowing wisdom; who is the savior of the world of conditionality; or is there not? This is the type of person who has doubts both about the Buddha's person and the Buddha's unique endowments.

N.B.:- *Kankhā*: doubt whether something is or is not *Vicikicchā*. Vacillation or wavering between two courses or interests.

Definitions of *vicikicchā*:-

Vigatā cikicchāti vicikicchā:

"That which is beyond the beneficent (lit., 'curative') effect of the Path knowledge is called *vicikiccha*."

Vicikicchatīti ārammanam nicchetum asakkanto kicchati kilamatīti:

"That which renders one deeply troubled due to being unable to decide between two thought-objects or interests is *vicikicchā*."

2. Doubts about the *Dhamma*:-

Dhamme kankhatītiādīsu pana kilese pajahantā cattāro ariyaāmaggo patipassaddhikilesāni cattāri samaññaphalāni maggaphalānam āramman paccaya bhūtam amatam mahānibbānam nāma atthi nu kho natthī ti kankhantopi ayam dhammo niyyāniko nu kho aniyyāniko ti kankhantopi dhamme kankhati nāma.

In the passage beginning with doubts about the *dhammas*, one who doubts asks himself: are there the four Path-knowledge that are said to expel the defilements that plague the mind such as greed, hate, delusion, conceit, wrong view, doubt, distractedness, moral shamelessness, moral recklessness; or are there not? Are there the four booms of *bhikkhuhood* (*sāmaña phalāni*) that have successive (lit., 'repetitive) effects of quenching the human passions; or are there not? Is there such a thing as the sublime *nibbāna*, the deathless, the mental object of the Paths and the Fruition? Or he might ask: do these (ten) *dhammas*, i.e., the four Paths and the four Fruitions, *nibbāna* and the Learning of the *Dhamma*, have the efficacy to deliver one from all the world's sufferings; or do they not? Such are the sort of doubts that pertain to the Law.

3. Doubts about the Noble *Sanghā*:-

Cattāro maggatthakā cattāro phalatthakāti idam sangharatanam atthi nu kho natthiti kankhantopi ayam sangho suppatipanno nu kho duppatipannoti kankhanto pi etasmin sangharatane dinnassa vipākaphalam atthi nu kho natthīti kankhantopi sanghe kankhati nāma.

Is there *Sanghā*, the Precious refuge, constituted of the four classes of Path-winners (lit., established in the Path) and Fruit-winners (lit., established in the Fruitions), or is there not? Do the members of the *Sanghā* conduct well, or don't they? Is it beneficial (spiritually) to make offering to the *Sanghā*, or is it not?"

4. Doubts about the training:

Tisso pana sekkhā atthi nu kho natthīti kankhantopi tisso sekkhā sekkhitapaccayena ānisamso atthi nu kho natthīti kankhanto-pi sekkhāya kankhati nāma.

Is there such a thing as the threefold training consisting of morality, concentration and knowledge; or is there not? Is it really beneficial (spiritually) to undergo such threefold training; or is it not? Such are the doubts pertaining to the training.

5. The doubts about the three time concepts:

Pubbanto ti vuccati atītāni khandhādhātu āyatānāni aparantoti anāgatāni. Tattha atītesu khandhādīsu atītāni nu kho na nukho ti kankhanto pubbante kankhati nāma. Anāgatesu anāgatāni nu kho na nukho ti kankhanto aparante kankhati nāma. Ubhayattha kankhanto pubbantāparante kankhati nāma.

"The aggregates, the elements and the sense-bases pertaining to the previous existences are called the past extremity; those that will appear in future existence are called the future extremity. Of the two, he who asks himself: "Was there any past existence for me? Or did I exist in the past, or not?" - is one who has doubts about the past extremity. He who asks himself, "Will I exist in the future, or not?" is one who doubts about the future extremity. He who feels uncertain both about the past and the future existences is called one who doubts both about the past and the future extremities."

In the ultimate truth, the aggregates, the sense-bases and the elements have been in existence in the past; they do so at present, and will continue to do so in future until

one attains *nibbāna* (as an *arahat*). There is no person who lived, is living, or will live. Yet as conventional usage, such and such a being or person has to be referred to.*

8. Doubt about the Law of Causality:

Dvādasapadikam paccayavattam atthi nu ko natthīti kankhanto idapaccayatā paticcasamuppannesu dhammesu kankhati nāma.

Jātiādīsu tam tam paticca āgama samuppannāti paticcasmuppanāti idam vuttam hoti.

"Is there a Law that there is the round of resultants dependent on specific cause; or is there not?" Doubts regarding resultant *dhamma* that are caused by conditioning *dhammas*, such as *jarāmarana* (ageing and death) are caused by *jāti* (birth), consisting of twelve constituents or sections (*pada*), is doubt about the Law of Causality.

In the *dhammas* beginning with *jāti*, birth, the consequent *dhammas* arise dependent on the antecedent *dhammas*, i.e., ageing and death are dependent on birth. Hence ageing and death are called resultant *dhammas*, *paticca samuppanna*.

All those eight kinds of doubt have the governing mental property of *vicikicchā setasika*. Although elaborate knowledge about the eight doubts is desirable, the crucial thing is to understand the four truths; on seeing the truths all doubts are cleared.

Doubts Vanish When One Has Discrimination Of Meaning

(Result) And Discrimination Of The *Dhamma* (Cause)

Result and cause are viewed with discrimination as follows:-

Dubbkhe ñānam atthapatisambhidā dukkha sammdaye ñānam dhamma.

* 'Conventional usage': Reference to individual being or person is conventional truth which is necessary to impress upon the average man or worldling with kamma and its resultant. (Translator)

patisambhidā. Dukkhaniroddhe ñānam atthapatisambhidā dukkhanirodha gāminiyāpatipādaya ñānam dhammapatisambhidāti

Knowledge about the truth of *dukkha* (i.e., the twelve kinds of trouble or woe) is *attha patisambhidā* or discrimination of meaning or result; knowledge about craving, the cause of *dukkha*, is *dhammapatisambhidā** or discrimination of cause (*samudaya saccā*). Knowledge about cessation or non-arising of *dukkha* is *atthapatisambhidā* or discrimination of meaning; knowledge about the practice leading to cessation of *dukkha* (i.e., *nibbāna*) is *dhammapatisambhidā* or discrimination of cause.

Herein cessation of *dukkha* (*nibbāna*) is referred to as result; this is to reveal the fact that it follows its cause which is practice of the Path. It is to let the person who undergoes the practice know of his results. As object of Path-knowledge, however, *nibbāna* is not any sort of result, for it is non-arising and not conditioned by any cause. (It is the unique *dhamma* beyond the Law of Causality). When the process of rebirth is brought to a standstill there is cessation of all conditioned existence. This is the same as saying realizing *nibbāna* by Path-knowledge.

Knowledge of Path-practice which is the (only) way to the cessation of *dukkha* is *dhammapatisambhidā* or discrimination of cause.

When one understands discriminatingly between cause and result, one sees through the falsity of the ego and discerns the truth that what rises and falls is merely a succession of causes and results and no person or being actually lives or dies. It is *dukkha* rising and changing through cause. When craving, the cause of all *dukkha*, is expelled by Path-knowledge, the process of rebirth, the starting point of all sorrow, is put to a stop. On gaining this discriminating knowledge, all kinds of doubts, eight kinds or sixteen kinds, counted in different ways, melt away.

Eulogy on the Buddha, the *Dhamma* and the *Sangha* by the royal mother of the Venerable *Sīvali:*

Princess *Suppāvāsa* of *Kauliya* clan, mother of the Venerable *Sivali* sang in praise of the Buddha, the *Dhamma* and the *Sanghā* in the following stanzas:-

Sammasambhddho vata so bhhagavā yo emassa evarūpassa dukkhassa pahānāya dhammam deseti. - Udāna

"For the expulsion of this endless Sorrow,

Occurring thus,

The Exalted One exhorted:

O how benefitting the All-knowing One:"

Suppatipanno vata so sāvaka sangho yo emassa evarūpassa dukkhassa pahānāya patipanno hoti. (Ibid.)

* *Dhammapatisambhidā*: Lit., 'Knowledge about law'. 'Law' is briefly a term for a condition (*paccaya*), a cause that produces fruit.

"For the expulsion of this endless Sorrow,

Occurring thus,

The Noble Ones forever strive:

O how well-conducted are the *Sanghā*:"

Eulogy on *Nibbāna*

Susukkham vata tam nibbānam yatthidam eva rūpam dukkham va samvijjati. (Ibid.)

"Occurring thus elsewhere,

Yet nowhere in *Nibbāna*

Is this Sorrow to be found:

That's why *Nibbāna* is so blissful!"

Eulogy on *Nibbāna*: Contrasting With mind-matter Complex.

Yam nāmarūpam aniccam khayatthena niccam vata nibbānam.

"Ephemeral is this mind-matter complex.

Subjected as it is to decay.

Eternal, indeed, is *Nibbāna*,

Beyond Death's sway."

Yam nāmarūpam dukkham bhayatthena. Sukkham vata nibbānam.

"Woeful is this mind-matter complex,

Threatened as it is by ageing and death.

Secure, indeed, is *Nibbāna*,

Beyond harm's way."

Yam nāmarūpam anatta asārakatthena Sāram vata nibbānam.

"Hollow is this mind-matter complex,

Lacking in substance, defying one's wishes.

Real, indeed, is *Nibbāna*

Beyond *kammic* Juggler's play."

Contemplating On the Wearisome Round of Rebirths

Jātijārādi vyakinnā attagehā tayo bhavā

Sajotibhūta bheravā ime sadā anabhiratā.

"Involved as it is in birth, ageing and death, existence on becoming (*bhavas*) in those three spheres (sensual, fine material and formless) are not for constant delight. On account of its severe constricted state, just like a prison cell, too, these *bhavas* are not for constant delight. Also because they are like glowing surfaces to tread on, they are not for constant delight. Also because they are like a deep forest infested with ferocious beasts and demons, they are not for constant delight."

Judging Whether Someone Is *Brahmana* (Noble One)

Or Not By His Speech.

Akakkasam viññāpinim giram sacca mudiraye.

Yāya nibhisaje kiñci tamaham byūmi brahmanam - Dhammapada, v. 408

"He who is never hard on anyone,

Who is soft spoken, instructive, truthful,

Not offensive to anyone,

Him I call a *Brahmana*, a Noble One."

An *Arahat* Cannot Be Seen Through By *Devas*.

Yassa antarato na santi kopā

Iti bhavā bhāvanca vitivatto

Tam vigatabhayam sukham vivekam

Asokam nānubhavānti devāpi dassanāya. - Dhammapada

"He whose mind is without anger,

Who is past the wrong views of

Eternalism and annihilationism,

Who has reached safety,

Who knows real happiness,

Who dwells in seclusion and detachment,

Who knows no sorrow,

Is an *arahat*.

Even the gods (*devas*) are unable to see through

His mind or his body.

Why An *Arahat* Is Called A '*Bhikkhu'*

Sabbaso nāmarupasmim yassa natthi mamāyitam

Asatā ca na socati sa ve bhikkhuti vuccati. - Ibid. v. 367

"He who never views any mentality - materiality

As 'I' and 'mine';

Who does not pine for what is no more,

Him I call a true *bhikkhu*, an *arahat*."

He Who Does Not Cling Is A '*Brahmana*'

Yassa Pure ca pacchā ca majjhime natthi kiñcanam

Akincanam anādānam tamaham byūmibrahmanam. - Ibid. v. 422

"He who cares not for any existence,

Whether of the past, the future or the present,

Who is attached to nothing,

Unconcerned and not clinging,

Him I call a *Brahmana*."

An *Arahat* Is Unmoved By Pain or Pleasure

Yassa kamapanko tinno kamakanako maddhito

Mohakkhayam anuppatto tassa sukhadukkhe na vedahti. - Ibid.

"He who has crossed the floods of sensuousness,

Who has trampled down the thorn of sensuousness,

And who has overcome delusion (and realized *nibbāna*)

Is unmoved by pleasure or pain."

On the Loathsomeness of the Body: A Discourse To *Therī Rūpanandī*.

Atthīnam nagaram katam mansalohitalepanam

Yattha jarā ca maccu ca makkho māno ca ohito. - Ibid. v. 150.

"This city (the body) is built with bones,

Plastered with flesh and blood;

And there dwells (lit., is deposited) in it

Ageing and death, deceit and detraction (of others' virtues).

That was the Buddha's discourse to his own sister who before entering *Bhikkhunihood* was conceited with beauty. The Myanmar rendering has included the scriptural description of human anatomy such as: three hundred bones, a handful of circulating (*samcarana*) blood, a tub-full of non-circulating (*asamcarana*) blood that soak up the nine hundred lumps (muscles) of flesh.

"First, tame yourself"

Attānameva pathamam patirūpe nivesaye

Athañña manusāseyya na kilisseyya pandito. - Ibid., v. 158

"Let one first set oneself up on the right course

Before instructing others.

Thus one does not incur reproach (lit., does not get soiled),

And is (therefore) wise."

(The background story:)

A certain *bikkhu* told his disciples to be sparing of the four requisites allowed under the *vinaya* rules. Correct though his instruction was, the motive was improper. For, as he reckoned, if his followers or pupils did not go often for alms, he would be the sole recipient of public donations. The Buddha know this ulterior motive and hence the exhortation above.

Righteous Conduct Safeguards All.

Attānam rakkhanto param rakkhati nāma;

Param rakkhanto attānam rakkhati nāma.

"He who protects oneself protects others too;

He who protects others is himself protected too".

By protecting oneself means abstaining from all evil conduct. When one guards oneself against the ten kinds of misconduct one is safe from falling to the miserable states of *apāya*. His righteous conduct also is sufficient safeguard for others.

By protecting others is meant practising loving-kindness and abiding in the noble states of universal good will, compassion and joy at others' wellbeing. Love begets love; kindness begets kindness. This is the way of Buddhas - to - be who try to perfect in these noble attitudes and attain Buddhahood ultimately. On a lesser scale, those kind attitudes can lead one to Universal Rulership.

The Wise Man Is Guided By Righteousness Only,

Disregarding Praise Or Censure.

Grahā ca pasamsā ca aniccā tāvakālikā.

Appakā cekadesāva na tā ikkheyya pandito.

Dhammādhammamva ikkheyya attanattham hitāhitam.

"Censure or praise are for the moment only,

And belong to a limited circle.

The wise should not take much account of them.

He should only consider

Whether his action is

Righteous, meaningful and beneficial."

Be truthful to yourself, People might take you for a wise man accomplished in morality, concentration and knowledge, yet if you are actually not so, popular acclaim is useless. On the other hand, if you are accomplished in the three aspects of religious training, no amount of slander could harm you.

On the Choice Of A Good Friend

Andham ca ekacakkhuñ ca ārakā parivajjaye

Dvicakkhum pana sevetha. na kilisseyya pandito - Anguttara Nikāya,

"Give a wide berth to the blind,

The unseeing one for worldly good as well as

Supramundane knowledge.

The one-eyed fellow, knowing worldly good only,

Should be treated the same way.

As for the double-sighted,

Seeing worldly good as well as

Possessed of wisdom heading to the supramundane,

You should always resort to him,

Thus you will have no cause to regret,

You'll be wiser for it."

Merit And Demerit Are Worlds Apart In Their Resultants.

Na hi dhammo adhammo ca ubho samavipākino

Adhammo niriyam neti dhammo pāpoti suggatim. - Theragāthā.

"Meritorious action and demeritorious action

Of course do not carry the same results:

Demerit sends you down to the torturous worlds of *niraya*:

Merit sends you up to the fortunate existences,

Culminating in *Nibbāna*."

Knowing One's Own Folly Is Wisdom Itself

Yo bālo maññati bālyam panditovāpi tena so.

Bālo pi panditamānī sa ve bāloti vuccati. - Dhammapada, v.63

"The fool who knows he is foolish

Is at least wise on that account.

The fool who thinks he is wise

Is truly a fool."

One who does not see his own folly is a deluded man; one who knows that he is still a fool is not a deluded man. He holds hope. Sooner or later he will mend his ways and gain wisdom.

Manners Bespeak A Man

A man can be judged wise or foolish from his deeds, words and thoughts.

Duccisititacintī ca dubbhāsitabhāsī ca dukammakaranakārī ca sa so puggalo bāloti vuccati.

"He is called a fool who thinks evil, who speaks evil, who does evil."

Sucintitacintī ca subhāsitabhāsī ca sukammakaranakārī ca sa so puggalo panditoti vuccati.

"He is called a wise one who thinks good, who speaks good, who does good."

By seeing a person's manners and hearing his words, people can very well gauge his worth.

Vyattipamānam kathitavākyam: "Speech reveals the man."

Be free from personal attachment or animosity if you want to free yourself from *dukkha*:-

Mahānidāna Sutta has this to teach:-

"When one is attached to someone or something,

One begets sorrow on parting with him or with it.

And so too in case of having to deal with some-

one or something you hate.

When you keep a neutral attitude to love and hate, neither circumstance causes sorrow." So *dukkha* springs from your own attitude only.

Only When One Sees the Truth Can One Make

Proper Assessment Of Others.

The Venerable *Vappa* of 'the group of five' uttered these joyous words:-

Passati passo passantam apassantañca passati.

Apassato apassantam passantañca na passati. - Theragāthā.

“One who sees the Four Noble Truths

Is able to assess an *arahat* as *arahat*, (‘the seeing one’)

And a worldling as worldling,(‘the non-seeing one’)

One who does not see the Four Noble Truths

Is unable to know an arahat as arahat,

Or a worldling as worldling.”

The group of five ascetics were the earliest disciples of the Buddha to gain enlightenment. The Buddha began his mission with the five (because they were his co-practitioners of asceticism before the Buddha won Self-enlighten ment). After the seven weeks of tranquillity reflecting on Buddhahood, the Buddha made his journey to the Deer Park where the group of five were staying. They did not know that the ascetic *Siddattha* had won Supreme Enlightenment, and had their doubts. When the Buddha, on that full-moon day of *Vasak*, revealed the Law, *Dhammacakka Pavattana Sutta*, one of them, the Venerable *Kondañña*, saw the Truth and won Stream-entry, shedding doubts. (Thus he was the first Noble One under *Gotama* Buddha’s Teaching, *Sāsanā*). From Full-moon day to the fourth waning day of *vasak* the Buddha’s discoursed on the *Dhammacakka* to the group, whereby each of the four ascetics followed the path of the Venerable *Kandañña* and gained Stream-entry. On the fifth waning day the Buddha discoursed to them on the not-self character of existence (*Anattalakkhana Sutta*), at the end of which all the five gained *arahatship*. Thereupon the Venerable *Vappa* uttered those joyous words above. It is important to note from these noble words that unless one gains insight-knowledge of the Truth, one is apt to doubt about the Buddha. Hence the need for enlightenment, without which one cannot discriminate who is or not worthy of veneration.

1. All sorrow springs from craving.

2. Only on forsaking craving, one is freed from *dukkha*; otherwise *dukkha* persists.

3. For expelling craving, ponder well on the inevitability of birth, ageing, disease, death, and the necessity of finding a livelihood which generally entails demerit leading to the miserable states.

4. Pondering deep on the evils that surround sentient existence, one gets weary with life, one tends to abandon craving for existence.

5. Practice of the Path means just meditating on the flaws, ill, dangers, of existence.

6. When the ill is discerned, the mind is inclined to cessation.

7. When the mind has been so inclined how could birth and attendant woes (*jarā-marana*) occur again?

8. And *nibbāna* the birth-less, the unborn, the unconditioned, is nothing but cessation.

How the Buddha And the Noble Ones

Renounce the World Of Three Spheres Of Existence.

(Question) Why did the Buddha and the numerous noble disciples renounce the world?

(Answer) Because they understand through insight-knowledge that all conditioned phenomena, to which the aggregates of mentality-materiality belong, are impermanent, woeful and vain, (*anicca*, *dukkha*, *anatta*).

The Highly Profitable Method of Contemplating on the

Thirty-two Parts or Components of the Body.

1. *Atthi imasmim kāye kesā loma nakhā danta, taco mamsam nhāru atthiatthimiñjam vakkam hadayam yakanam kilomaka pihakam papphāsam antam antagunam udariyam karīsam matthalungam pittam semham pubbo lohitam sedo medo assu vasā khelho singhānikā lasikā muttanti*.

“Here in this body are: body hair, finger and toe nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinews, bones, bone-marrow, kidney, heart, liver, midriff, spleen, lungs, bowels, entrails, gorge, feces, brains, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tear, grease, spittle, snot, oil of the joints and urine.”

Say those words in the reverse order, from *muttanti* (urine) to *kesā* (hair). Contemplate on each as to: (a) its colors (*vannatā*), (b) its shape (*santhānatā*), (c) its adverse character (*disatā*), (d) its location in the body (*okāsatā*).

2. *Atthi imasmim kāye kesā lomā nakhā dantā tāco; dantā nakhā lomā kesā*. (Reverse order from *taco* to *kesā*).

Atthi imasmim kāye kesā lomā nakhā danta taco mamsam nhāru atthi atthimiñjam vakkam; vakkam, - - - - kesā. (reverse order again).

Atthi imasmim kāye kesā lomā nakhā dantā taco mamsam nhāru atthi atthimiñjam vakkam hadayam yakanam kilomakam pihakam papphāsam; - - - - kesā. (reverse order again).

Atthi imasmim kāye kesā lomā nakhā danta taco mamsam nhāru atthi atthimajam vakkam hadayam yakanam kilomakam pihakam pappthāsam antam antagunam udariyam karisam mattalungam matthalungam - - - kesā. (reverse order again).

Atthi imasmim kāye kesā lomā - - - (P.) matthalungam pittam semham pubbo lohitam sedo medo; medo - - - kesā, (reverse order again).

Atthi imasmim kāye kesā lomā - - - (P.) assu vasā khelo singhānikā lasikā muttanti; muttanti - - - kesā, (reverse order again).

The above method is called *Nagabāsīva mahā samāpatti* mode of telling beads. It is profitable in the following ways:-

1. Contemplate on each of the thirty-two component parts of your body beginning from 'hair', *kesā*.

2. As you contemplate hard repeatedly you will come to realize that the body is loathsome indeed.

3. Contemplate on how the thirty-two parts are highly vulnerable to environmental factors such as cold, heat, gadfly, mosquito, fly, wind, sun's heat, snakes, scorpion, lice, etc., exposure to which have detrimental effects.

Observing closely 'again', one's inside is found to be simply filled with noxious filth, excreta, urine and putrid matter, etc.

When the mind is thus properly concentrated on the loathsomeness of the body, it does not relish the body, nor is it proud of it, nor is it misled into thinking it as one's own. Craving, conceit and wrong view, the three extending or expansionist evils, then fall off.

And when those expansionist defilements leave you, you are sure that the Path has been entered.

Who Is the One That Carries Out Action, Big Or Small?

It is only the thirty-two component parts of the body in conjunction with the element of motion, *vāyo dhātu*, under the direction of mind that carries out all actions, big or small.

At every posture, whether going or standing, sitting or lying, it is those thirty-two parts in conjunction with *vāyo* and mind that do the work.

Yet in common parlance we say someone goes, stands, etc. That is only conventionally true.

For, in the ultimate truth, it is the insensate set of materiality (as manifested in the 32 parts of the body) in co-ordination with, or under the will of the mind (mental aggregates) that carry out all bodily (and mental) functions.

If you contemplate on this fact at every movement you make, the false ego will be revealed. So meditation need not be in the sitting posture alone.

The Story of the Fifteen Hundred *Bhikkhus* Who Won Enlightenment

Through Contemplating on the Thirty-two Parts of the Body.

In the days of the Buddha the Venerable *Sona* who dwelt in *Mahāvana* Forest near *Sāvatthi* taught his fifteen hundred disciples the method of contemplating the nature of the thirty-two component parts of the body (*dvuttimsākārā*).* They followed the instructions well and attained to Path-knowledge in accordance with their innate inclinations.

The story is versified by way of condensation as follows:-

1. Five hundred of them contemplated on the loathsomeness of the body, which enabled them to discern the ephemeral nature of existence and thus gained release (from *dukkha*) through the Fruition of the Path.

2. The other five hundred of them contemplated on the corruptibility (through environmental factors) of the body which enabled them to discern the woefulness of existence and thus gained release.

3. The remaining five hundred of them contemplated on the impersonal character of the body (that the body is a mere compounded thing of elements that have peculiar qualities of extension, cohesion, heat or cold and support, and

* *dvuttimsākāra*: (*dvutimsa*, thirty-two; ā*kāra*, aspect) The thirty-two aspects of the body.

no essence or core exists apart from these elements, which enable them to discern the unsubstantial, impersonal or not-self character of existence and thus gained release.

In this way the fifteen hundred *bhikkhus* won enlightenment, five hundred having realized *anicca*, five hundred having realized *dukkha*, and five hundred having realized *anatta*. - in accordance with their innate inclinations.

Translator's note; The two topics occurring at p. 350 p. 352 of the original text are treated in combination, as they are identical in substance. The only difference lies in terminology: in the former *magga phala* 'Fruition of the Path' is used whereas in the latter *vimuttam*, 'release', is used which are synonymous.

The Nature of the Thirty-two Component Parts As

Meditation Subjects for Path-knowledge.

It should be noted that although the thirty-two component-parts consist of 20 of the *pathavī* (element of extension) and 12 of ā*po* (element of cohesion) these descriptions follow the predominant nature of the parts thus classified. As a matter of fact, every one of them is compounded of all the eight inseparable material qualities, namely: *pathavī* (extension), ā*po* (cohesion), *tejo* (heat), *vāyo* (motion or support), *vanna* (color), *rasa* (taste), *gandha* (smell), and *oja* (nutritive essence).

1. The thirty-two parts of the body, being conditioned by *kamma*, consciousness or mind, temperature (climate) and nutrition are subject to change: they must age, contract disease, and perish. These, in sum, point out their three inherent characteristics of *anicca*, *dukkha*, *anatta*. Hence they are truly woeful, *dukkha saccā*.

2. The thirty-two parts (i.e., the physical body) has been a product of past craving for existence. Hence craving is comprehended as the cause why this body, a handful of woes, or a mass of suffering, has come into existence. This is *samudaya saccā*.

3. The persistent pondering on the impermanence, painfulness, unreality, loathsomeness, changeability (ageing, death, etc.) is the practice of the Path: it is developing insight with right understanding (*sammāditthi vipassanā*).

4. Having developed insight and cultivated the sense of weariness of existence due to its danger, one is inclined to cessation or non-becoming that is *nibbāna*. Being so inclined, there is conscious abandonment of craving or attachment to existence. This is *magga saccā*.

5. The realization of cessation at the moment of abandonment of attachment is *nirodha saccā* which is *nibbāna* itself.

In the above-said manner, one who meditates on the thirty-two parts can very well accomplish the four Path-functions of: comprehending *dukkha* (that existence is sorrowful) relinquishing craving, the source of *dukkha*; cessation experienced at that particular moment when craving is consciously abandoned); and the developing of the insight necessary for Path-consciousness. When these four Path-functions are accomplished, the Path is entered. Thus one becomes firmly established as *sotapanna.*

The Six Sense-bases Viewed From the Ultimate Truth Aspect.

One may meditate on the internal sense-bases of eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind from the ultimate Truth aspect. Here is the method:

Cakkhu, eye, (for instance) is *dukkha* in truth, *dukkha saccā.* Craving for existence that occurred in the previous existence is the cause of the present *dukkha*. This is the truth of the cause, *samudaya saccā*.

The cessation, or stoppage of fresh arising as rebirth, of both eye and craving for it, is the truth of cessation, *nirodha saccā*.

The practice in developing insight for the cessation of the aggregates or *dukkha*, together with the cause thereof (i.e., craving), is the truth of the Path, *magga saccā*.

Regarding the remaining five sense-organs or bases too, one may meditate in above manner.

Case for Memorizing

Through craving in the past, has this body of thirty-two components come into existence.

When viewed rightly that this body is truly woeful for its impermanence, insubstantiality and loathsomeness, one gains insight.

Through insight, forsaking of craving is accomplished.

When one does not crave for fresh becoming, no such detestable set of thirty-two components arises again.

And that indeed is cessation of *dukkha,* that is *nibbāna*.

Date of completion of the present book

The author was born on Wednesday, the fourteenth waxing day of *Tagu* (before Myanmar New Year) April, 1230 B. E. in *Sagu* Township, *Minbu* District in *Magwe* Division. This book was completed on Saturday, the fourteenth waning day of *Tawthalin* (September) 1309 B. E., 2491 *Sāsanā* Era. The writing of the book was begun and finished during the seventy ninth year of the author's life.

Conclusion

Iti bhaddanta Reveta nāmattherena racitāyam catusaccadalhīkamma kathā nāmo gantho nitthito.

Here ends this treatise entitled *Catusacca Daḷhī Kamma Kathā*, so named to signify its object of placing the reader firmly established in the Four Noble Truths, written by the Elder *Revata*.